FALL, 1964 VOLUME XXXI, NUMBER 4

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NEW DIRECTIONS BOOKS • Fall/Winter

Choromanski

JEALOUSY AND MEDICINE by Michal Choromanski. First American edition of the acclaimed Polish novel.
$4.50; Paper, $1.70 (Sept.)

Nicklaus

THE MAN WHO BIT THE SUN by Frederick Nicklaus. First book of poems by a young American. Paper Gift Edition, $1.50 (Oct.)

Williams

THE ECCENTRICITIES OF A NIGHTINGALE and SUMMER AND SMOKE by Tennessee Williams. New version of the play *Summer and Smoke*, with the original text. $5.00 (Oct.)

Rilke

NEW POEMS by Rainer Maria Rilke. Translated by J. B. Leishman. First complete English translation of Rilke's *Neue Gedichte*. Bilingual.
$6.75 (Oct.)

Thomas

DYLAN THOMAS'S CHOICE. An Anthology of Poetry Spoken by Dylan Thomas. Edited by Ralph Maud and Aneirin Talfan Davies. Boxed Gift Edition. $5.00 (Oct.)

Kirstein

RHYMES OF A PFC by Lincoln Kirstein. Picaresque memoir, in ballad form, of a PFC in World War II. $3.50 (Oct.)

Hall

US HE DEVOURS by James B. Hall. 14 stories by a leading modern writer. Joint publication of ND-San Francisco Review.
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Guerard

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Bronk

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$3.00; Paper, $1.25 (Oct.)

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ND Paperbooks

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SELECTED WRITINGS by Paul Valery
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Order ND Books from the distributors, J. B. Lippincott Company, E. Washington Square, Philadelphia 5, Pa. / NEW DIRECTIONS 333 — 6 Ave., N.Y. 14

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Robert Lowell

MY KINSMAN, MAJOR MOLINEUX

CHARACTERS
(In order of appearance)

ROBIN
BOY (his brother)
FERRYMAN
FIRST BARBER
TAVERN KEEPER
MAN WITH PEWTER MUG
CLERGYMAN
PROSTITUTE
MAN WITH MASK
MAN IN PERIWIG
SECOND BARBER
WATCHMAN
FIRST INDIAN
SECOND INDIAN
MAJOR MOLINEUX
CITIZENS OF BOSTON

THE SCENE
Boston, just before the American Revolution

(To the left of the stage, ROBIN, *a young man barely eighteen, in a coarse grey coat, well-worn but carefully repaired, leather breeches, blue yarn stockings, and a worn three-cornered hat. He carries a heavy oak-sapling cudgel and has a wallet slung over his shoulder. Beside him, his brother, a* BOY *of ten or twelve, dressed in the same respectable but somewhat rustic manner. On the far left of the stage, the triangular prow of a dory; beside it, a huge* FERRYMAN *holding an upright oar. He has a white curling beard. His dress, although eighteenth-century, half suggests that he is Charon. Lined across the stage and in the style of a primitive New England sampler, are dimly seen five miniature houses: a barber shop, a tavern, a white church, a shabby brick house with a glass bay window, and a pillared mansion, an official's house, on its cornice the golden lion and unicorn of England. The houses are miniature, but their doors are mansize. Only* ROBIN, *his brother, and the* FERRYMAN *are lit up.)*

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ROBIN

Here's my last crown, your double price
for ferrying us across the marsh
at this ungodly hour.

FERRYMAN

A crown!
Do you want me to lose my soul?
Do you see King George's face
judging us on this silver coin?
I have no price.

ROBIN

You asked for double.

FERRYMAN

I'll take the crown for your return trip.
No one returns though.

ROBIN

No one?

FERRYMAN

No one.
People go round in circles here.
This is the city of the dead.

ROBIN

What's that?

FERRYMAN

I said this city's Boston,
No one begs here. Are you deaf?

ROBIN *(To the* BOY*)*

Brother, look! The lights of Boston!

(The little houses on stage light up, then dim out.)

ROBIN *(To the* FERRYMAN*)*

Show me my kinsman's mansion. You
must know him—Major Molineux,
the most important man in town.

FERRYMAN

The name's familiar . . . Molineux . . .
Wasn't he mixed up with the French?
He's never at home now. If you'll wait
here, you'll meet him on his rounds.

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All our important people drift
sooner or later to my ferry landing,
and stand here begging for the moon.
You'll see your cousin. You're well-placed.

ROBIN

I know it. My kinsman's a big man here.
He told me he would make my fortune;
I'll be a partner in his firm,
either here or in London.

FERRYMAN

Settle
for London, that's your city, Boy.
Majors are still sterling silver across
the waters. All our English born
suddenly seem in love with London.
Your cousin's house here is up for sale.

ROBIN

He cares for England. *Rule Britannia,*
that's the tune he taught me. I'm
surprised he's leaving.

FERRYMAN

He's surprised!
He seemed to belong here once. He wished
to teach us *Rule Britannia,* but
we couldn't get it through our heads.
He gave us this to keep us singing.
(The FERRYMAN *holds up a boiled lobster.)*

ROBIN

You're joking, it's a lobster.

FERRYMAN

No.
Look, it's horny, boiled and red,
It is the Major's spitting image.

(On the other side of the stage, TWO BRITISH REDCOATS *are seen marching slowly in step with shouldered muskets.* Rule Britannia *played faintly.)*

FERRYMAN *(Pointing to* SOLDIERS*)*
Here are the Major's chicken lobsters.

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ROBIN

Our soldiers!

FERRYMAN

We call them lobsterbacks.
They are the Major's privates. Wherever
they are gathered together, he is present.
You'll feel his grip behind their claws.
What are you going to do now:
run home to Deerfield, take a ship
for England, Boy, or chase the soldiers?

ROBIN

Why, I'm staying here. I like
soldiers. They make me feel at home.
They kept the Frenchmen out of Deerfield.
They'll tell me where my kinsman lives.

FERRYMAN

The French are finished. The British
are the only Frenchmen left.
Didn't you say your cousin's name
was Molineux?

ROBIN

He's Norman Irish.
Why are you leaving?

FERRYMAN

Money. The soldiers
make me pay them for the pleasure
of shuttling them across the marsh.
Run, Boy, and catch those soldiers' scarlet
coat tails while they're still around.

(The FERRYMAN *goes off pushing his boat.* ROBIN *and the* BOY *advance towards the* SOLDIERS.*)*

ROBIN

I need your help, Sirs.

FIRST SOLDIER *(Smiling)*

We are here
for service, that's our unpleasant duty.

(As ROBIN *and the* BOY *advance, there's a shout.* TWO HOODLUMS *rush on stage.)*

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HOODLUM

You lobsters, you damned lobsterbacks!

(The HOODLUM *hits one of the* SOLDIERS *with a snowball.)*

SECOND SOLDIER

Let's stab them down. I've had enough.

FIRST SOLDIER

No, easy, we are on our best
behavior—Major Molineux's
orders. The time will come for justice.

SECOND SOLDIER

Let's go!

FIRST SOLDIER

Watch out. The bastards want
to trap us in the crooked streets.

(The SOLDIERS *chase the* HOODLUMS *off stage and disappear. Shots are heard, then derisive screams.)*

BOY

They're playing cops and robbers, Robin.

ROBIN

They are too rough! I liked the way
the soldiers smiled. I wonder how
anyone could distrust a soldier.

BOY

We've lost our guide.

ROBIN

We'll find another.

BOY

Why did that boatman gnash his teeth
at Cousin Major?

ROBIN

He was cold.
That's how big city people talk.
Let's walk. We're here to see the city.

(As ROBIN *and the* BOY *start moving, the miniature houses light up one by one and then go dark. A* BARBER *comes out of the barber shop; he holds a razor, and a bowl of suds. A* TAVERN KEEPER *enters holding a newspaper.)*

BARBER *(Cutting away the suds with his razor)*

That's how we shave a wig.

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TAVERN KEEPER

You mean
a Tory.

BARBER

Shave them to the bone!

TAVERN KEEPER *(Pointing to newspaper)*

Here's the last picture of King George;
He's passed another tax on tea.

BARBER

Health to the King, health to the King!
Here's rum to drown him in the tea!

(Drenches the newspaper with his mug. A CLERGYMAN, *white-wigged, all in black, comes out of the church.)*

CLERGYMAN

What an ungodly hour! The city's
boiling. All's rum and revolution.
We have an everlasting city,
but here in this unsteady brightness,
nothing's clear, unless the Lord
enlighten us and show the winner!

(A PROSTITUTE *comes out of the bay window house. She wears a red skirt and a low, full-bosomed white blouse.)*

PROSTITUTE

Here in the shadow of the church,
I save whatever God despises—
Whig or Tory, saint or sinner,
I'm their refuge from the church.

(The pillared mansion lights up. A MAN *comes out in a blue coat and white trousers like General Washington's. He wears a grayish mask covered with pocks. His forehead juts out and divides in a double bulge. His nose is a yellow eagle's beak. His eyes flash like fire in a cave. He looks at himself in a mirror.)*

MAN WITH MASK

My mind's on fire. This fire will burn
the pocks and paleness from my face.
Freedom has given me this palace.
I'll go and mingle with the mob.

(Now the houses are dark. ROBIN *rubs his eyes in a daze, stares into the darkness, then turns to his brother.)*

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BOY

Who are these people, Brother Robin?
We're in the dark and far from Deerfield.

ROBIN

We're in the city, Little Brother.
Things will go smoother when we find
our kinsman, Major Molineux.

BOY

Our kinsman isn't like these people.
He is a loyal gentleman.

ROBIN

We'll see. He swore he'd make my fortune,
and teach you Latin.

BOY

I want something.

ROBIN

Let's see the city.

BOY

I want a flintlock.

(A MAN *enters from the right. He wears a full gray periwig, a wide-skirted coat of dark cloth and silk stockings rolled up above the knees. He carries a polished cane which he digs angrily into the ground at every step. "Hem, hem," he says in a sepulchral voice as he walks over to the barber shop.* TWO BARBERS *appear, one with a razor and the other with a bowl of suds.)*

MAN WITH PERIWIG

Hem! Hem!

ROBIN

Good evening, honored sir.
Help us. We come from out of town.

MAN WITH PERIWIG

A good face and a better shoulder!
Hem, hem! I see you're not from Boston.
We need good stock in Boston. You're lucky!
Meeting me here was providential.
I'm on the side of youth. Hem, hem!
I'll be your guiding lamp in Boston.
Where do you come from?

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ROBIN

Deerfield.

MAN WITH PERIWIG

Deerfield!
Our bulwark from the savages!
Our martyred village! He's from Deerfield,
Barber. We can use his muscle.

BARBER

You can feel it.

MAN WITH PERIWIG *(Seeing the* BOY*)*

Look, a child!

BARBER

Shall I shave him?

MAN WITH PERIWIG

Yes, shave him,
and teach him to beat a drum.

BOY

I want a flintlock.

MAN WITH PERIWIG

A gun! You scare me!
Come on Apollo, we must march.
We'll put that shoulder to the wheel.
Come, I'll be your host in Boston.

ROBIN

I have connections here, a kinsman . . .

MAN WITH PERIWIG

Of course you have connections here.
They will latch on to you like fleas.
This is your town! Boy! With that leg
You will find kinsmen on the moon.

ROBIN

My kinsman's Major Molineux.

MAN WITH PERIWIG

Your kinsman's Major Molineux!
Let go my coat cuff, Fellow. I have
authority, authority!
Hem! Hem! Respect your betters. Your leg
will be acquainted with the stocks

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by peep of day! You fellows help me!
Barber, this man's molesting me!

FIRST BARBER *(Closing in)*

Don't hit his honor, Boy! His honor
is a lover of mankind!

BOY

Brain him with your cudgel, Robin!

ROBIN

Come, Brother, we will see the city;
they're three to one and have a razor.

*(*ROBIN *and the* BOY *back off. Barbershop goes dark.)*

BOY

Who was that fellow, Brother Robin?
He had a chirping songbird's voice.

ROBIN

It takes all kinds to make a city.

BOY

He looked you over like a tailor.
What did he have against our kinsman?

ROBIN

He is some snotty, county clerk,
chipping and chirping at his betters.
He isn't worth the Major's spit.

BOY

You should have brained him with your stick.

ROBIN

Let's go, now. We must see the city
and try to find our kinsman's house.
I am beginning to think he's out
of town. Look, these men will help us.

(The tavern lights up. A sign with King George III's head hangs in front. There's a poster nailed to the door. The MAN WITH THE MASK *strolls over and sits in the chair.)*

CROWD

Health to the rattlesnake. A health
to Colonel Greenough! He's our man!

MAN WITH MASK

A shine, Men, you must shine my shoes

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so bright King George will see his face
flash like a guinea on the toe.

CROWD

Health to the rattlesnake!

TAVERN KEEPER *(Turning to* ROBIN*)*

You boys
are from the country, I presume.
I envy you, you're seeing Boston
for the first time. Fine town, there's lots
to hold you, English monuments,
docks, houses, and a fleet of tea-ships
begging for buyers. I trust you'll stay;
nobody ever leaves this city.

ROBIN

We come from Deerfield.

TAVERN KEEPER

Then you'll stay;
no Indians scalp us in our beds,
our only scalpers are these men here. *(General laughter)*

ROBIN

Our massacre was eighty years
ago. We're not frontiersmen now,
we've other things to talk about.

BARBER

He has other things to talk about.
This boy's a gentleman. He is
no redskin in a coonskin cap.

ROBIN

I'm on our village council. I've
read Plutarch.

TAVERN KEEPER

You are an ancient Roman.
You'll find you like our commonwealth.
I crave the honor of your custom.
I've whiskey, gin and rum and beer,
and a spruce beer for your brother.

BOY

I want a real beer.

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BARBER

Give them beer.

TAVERN KEEPER *(Shouting)*

Two real beers for the Deerfield boys,
they have the fighting Deerfield spirit.

ROBIN

I'm sure you'll trust me for your money.
I have connections here in Boston,
my kinsman's Major Molineux.
I spent our money on this journey.

MAN WITH MUG

His kinsman's Major Molineux;
sometimes a boy is short of money! *(Laughter)*

MAN *(Bringing out a silver Liberty Bowl)*

I've something stronger than beer.
Here is the Bowl of Liberty.
The Major dropped this lobster in
the bowl. It spikes the drink.

*(*MAN *puts down his mug and lifts a lobster out of the bowl. Cheers.)*

ROBIN

I know
the lobster is a British soldier.

MAN

Yes, there they are.

(The TWO REDCOATS *march on stage as before. Silence. The* MAN WITH THE MASK *starts writing on a bench. The* SOLDIERS *saunter over to him.)*

FIRST SOLDIER

What are you writing, Colonel Greenough?

MAN WITH MASK

My will.

FIRST SOLDIER

Things aren't that desperate.

MAN WITH MASK

I'm adding up my taxes, Redcoat.
Just counting up the figures kills me.
My bankers say I'm burning money.
I can't afford your bed and board
and livery, soldiers. We'll have to part.

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SECOND SOLDIER

I've had enough. We ought to throw
them all in jail.

FIRST SOLDIER

Go easy.

ROBIN *(Walking shyly up to* SOLDIERS*)*

Sir,
I need your guidance, I'm looking for
my kinsman, Major Molineux.

FIRST SOLDIER

Watch your words!

SECOND SOLDIER

Damn your insolence!

FIRST SOLDIER

We'll haul you to the Major's court.

(Shots and screams off stage. SOLDIERS *leave on the run.)*

MAN *(Pointing to* ROBIN*)*

He's one of us.

MAN WITH MUG

He is a spy.

CROWD

Both boys are spies or Tories.

TAVERN KEEPER *(Drawing* ROBIN *over to the poster)*

Look,
Do you see this poster, boy? It says,
"Indentured servant, Jonah Mudge:
ran from his master's house, gray coat,
oak cudgel, leather pants, small brother,
and his master's third best hat.
Pound sterling's offered any man
who nabs and lodges him in jail."
Trudge off, Young Man, you'd better trudge!

CROWD

Trudge, Jonah Mudge, you'd better trudge!

BOY

They're drunk. You'd better hit them, Robin.

ROBIN

They'd only break my stick and brains.

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BOY

For God's sake stand and be a man!

ROBIN

No, they're too many, little brother.
Come, I feel like walking.
We haven't seen the city yet.

(Lights go off. ROBIN *and* BOY *stand alone.)*

BOY

We haven't seen our kinsman, Robin.
I can't see anything.

ROBIN

You'd think
the Major's name would stand us for
a beer. It's a funny thing, Brother, naming
our kinsman, Major Molineux
sets all these people screaming murder.
Even the soldiers.

(The house with the bay window lights up. A WOMAN*'s red skirt and bare shoulders are clearly visible through the window. She is singing.)*

WOMAN

Soldiers, sailors.
Whigs and Tories, saints and sinners,
I'm your refuge from despair.

BOY

Robin, the poor thing must be freezing!
She has so little on!

ROBIN

Living
so close together keeps these city
people warm.

BOY

She's smiling at you.
Robin, I think she knows us.

ROBIN

Maybe
she wants my coat.

BOY

I think she knows

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our kinsman.

ROBIN

Then, I'd better knock. *(Knocks)*
Sweet, pretty mistress, help me. I
am tired and lost. I'm looking for
my kinsman, Major Molineux.
You have bright eyes.

WOMAN

I know your kinsman.
Everybody is my kinsman here.

ROBIN

Yes, I am sure. You have kind eyes.
My kinsman is a blood relation.

WOMAN

You're my blood relation too then.
What a fine back and leg you have!
You're made right.

ROBIN

Oh, I will be made
when I find my kinsman. You
must know him, he's a man of some
importance in your city, Lady.

WOMAN

The Major dwells here.

ROBIN

You're thinking of some other major,
Lady; mine is something more
important than a major, he's
a sort of royal governor,
and a man of fortune. Molineux
tea ships sail from here to China.
He has a gilded carriage, twenty
serving men, two flags of England
flying from his lawn. You could hide
your little house behind a sofa
in his drawing-room.

WOMAN

I know,
your kinsman is a man of parts,

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that's why he likes to camp here. Sometimes
his greatness wearies him. These days
even kings draw in their horns,
and mingle with the common people.
Listen, you'll hear him snoring by
the roof.

ROBIN

I hear a hollow sound.
My kinsman must be happy here.
I envy him this hideaway.

WOMAN

You mean to say you envy him
the mistress of his house. Don't worry,
a kinsman of the Major's is
my kinsman. I knew you right away.
You have your kinsman's leg and shoulders.
He wears an old three-cornered hat
and leather small-clothes here in the rain.
Why, you *are* the good old gentleman,
only you're young! What is this cloth?

(The WOMAN *feels the cloth of* ROBIN*'s trousers.)*

ROBIN

It's deerskin. I'm from Deerfield, Lady.

WOMAN

You must be starved. I'll make you happy.

ROBIN

I'll wait here on your doorstep, Lady.
Run up and tell the Major that
his Deerfield cousins are in town.

WOMAN

The Major'd kill me, if I woke him.
You see, he spilled a little too much
rum in his tea. Listen, you'll hear
him snoring like a creaking rope.

ROBIN

I'll leave a note then. I must go,
my little brother needs some sleep.

*(*WOMAN *takes* ROBIN*'s hat and twirls it on her finger.)*

What are you doing with my hat?

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WOMAN

I'm showing you our Boston rites
of hospitality. The Major
would kill me, if I turned you out
on such a night. I even have
a downstairs bedroom for your brother.
I find a playroom comes in handy.

BOY

I want to go with Robin.

WOMAN

Oh, dear,
children keep getting me in trouble.
We have a law. *(A bell is heard off stage.)*
Mother of God!
(The WOMAN *ducks into her house. Her light goes out.)*

BOY

Why did the lady slam her door?

ROBIN

The bell reminded her of something.
She has to catch up on her sleep.

BOY

Has the Major left his mansion?
Is he really sleeping here?

ROBIN

How can I tell you? Everyone
answers us in riddles.

BOY

She said,
the Major dwells here.

ROBIN

That's her city
way of being friendly, Brother.

BOY

Robin, the Major could afford
to buy the lady better clothes.
She was almost naked.

ROBIN

She
was dressed unwisely.

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BOY

Isn't Eve
almost naked in our Bible?

ROBIN

Don't ask so many questions, Brother.
I wish I knew the naked truth.

(A WATCHMAN *enters, disheveled and yawning. He holds a lantern with a bell tied to it and a spiked staff.)*

WATCHMAN

Stop, we don't allow this sort
of talk about the Bible here.

ROBIN

You are mistaken, Sir. I said
I wished I knew the naked truth.

WATCHMAN

You're in New England. Here we fine
mothers for bearing naked children.
You're leading this child into perdition.
We have a fine for that. What's in
your wallet, Boy?

ROBIN

Nothing.

WATCHMAN

Nothing! You've been inside then!

ROBIN

Watchman, I'm looking for my kinsman.

WATCHMAN

And you thought you'd find him in this house
Doing his martial drill.

ROBIN

You know him!
My kinsman's Major Molineux.
I see you know him, he will pay you
if you will lead us to his house.

WATCHMAN *(Singing)*

Your aunt's the lord high sheriff,
your uncle is King George;
if you can't pay the tariff,
the house will let you charge.

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ROBIN

I asked for Major Molineux.

WATCHMAN

Keep asking! We are cleaning house.
The Major's lost a lot of money
lately, buying bad real estate.
He can't afford his country cousins.
Move, you filthy, sucking hayseed!
or I'll spike you with my stick!

BOY

Why don't you hit him, Brother?

WATCHMAN

I'll have
you in the stocks by daybreak, Boy.

ROBIN

We'll go, Sir. I'm your countryman
learning the customs of the city.
I've learned how to avoid the stocks.

WATCHMAN *(Goes off singing)*

Baggy buttocks, baggy buttocks,
the Queen of England's willing
to serve you for a shilling,
to stick you in the stocks.

BOY

Robin, these people are like wild
wolves walking through the woods.

ROBIN

We're learning
how to live. The man was drunk.

BOY

Our Deerfield watchmen only drink
at Communion. Something's wrong,
these people need new blood.

ROBIN

Perhaps
they'll get it. Here's a clergyman,
he'll tell us where to find our kinsman.

(The CLERGYMAN *comes across the stage. He is awkwardly holding a*

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large English flag on a staff.)

ROBIN

Help me, I beg you, Reverend Sir,
I'm from Deerfield, I'm looking for
my kinsman, Major Molineux.
No one will tell me where he lives.

CLERGYMAN

I have just left the Major's house.
He is my patron and example.
A good man—it's a pity though
he's so outspoken; other good men
misunderstand the Major's meaning.
He just handed me this British
flag to put above my pulpit—
a bit outspoken!

ROBIN

Our country's flag, Sir!

CLERGYMAN

Yes, a bit outspoken. Come
I'll lead you to your kinsman's house.

(The MAN WITH THE MASK *strides hurriedly across the stage, and unrolls a rattlesnake flag, which he hands to the* CLERGYMAN, *who has difficulty in managing the two flags.)*

MAN WITH MASK

I have a present for you, Parson:
our Rattlesnake. "Don't tread on me!"
it says. I knew you'd want to have one.
Hang it up somewhere in church;
there's nothing like the Rattlesnake
for raising our declining faith.

CLERGYMAN

I thank you, Sir.

MAN WITH MASK

You'd better hurry.
Think of the man who had no garment
for the wedding. Things are moving.

(The MAN WITH MASK *hurries off stage.)*

CLERGYMAN *(To himself)*

God help us, if we lose! *(Turns to go)*

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ROBIN

Sir, you're leaving! You promised me
you'd lead me to my kinsman's house.
Please, let me help you with the flags.

CLERGYMAN

I'll see you later. I have to hurry.
I have a sick parishioner,
a whole sick parish! I have a notion
one of these flags will cure us. Which?
Everyone's so emphatic here.
If you should meet your kinsman, tell him
I'm praying for him in my church.

*(*CLERGYMAN *goes out. A loud "hem, hem" is heard. The* MAN IN THE PERIWIG *comes jauntily forward followed by the* BARBERS. *He goes to the house with the bay window and raps with his cane. The light inside the house goes on. A rattlesnake flag has been nailed to the door. No one sees* ROBIN *and the* BOY.*)*

FIRST BARBER

Look, your Honor, Mrs. Clark
has taken on the Rattlesnake.

MAN WITH PERIWIG

Good, this pricks my fainting courage.
"Don't tread on me!" That's rather odd
for Mrs. Clark.

FIRST BARBER

Come on, your Honor.

SECOND BARBER

There's always a first time.

FIRST BARBER

Then a second.

MAN WITH PERIWIG

Thank God, I've but one life to give
my country. They say it's like cold mutton.
Lay on, Macduff! I owe this to
my reputation, Boys.

FIRST BARBER

He owes
his reputation to the boys.

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Susan Sontag

NOTES ON "CAMP"

Many things in the world have not been named; and many things, even if they have been named, have never been described. One of these is the sensibility—unmistakably modern, a variant of sophistication but hardly identical with it—that goes by the cult name of "Camp."

A sensibility (as distinct from an idea) is one of the hardest things to talk about; but there are special reasons why Camp, in particular, has never been discussed. It isn't a natural mode of sensibility, if there be any such. Indeed the essence of Camp is its love of the unnatural: of artifice and exaggeration. And Camp is esoteric—something of a private code, a badge of identity even, among small urban cliques. Apart from a lazy two-page sketch in Christopher Isherwood's novel *The World in the Evening* (1948), it has never broken into print. To talk about Camp is therefore to betray it. If the betrayal can be defended, it will be for the edification it provides, or the dignity of the conflict it resolves. For myself, I plead the goal of self-edification, and the goad of a sharp conflict in my own sensibility. I am strongly drawn to Camp, and almost as strongly frustrated by it. That is why I want to talk about it, why I can talk about it. For no one who wholeheartedly shares in a given sensibility can analyze it; he can only, whatever his intention, exhibit it. To name a sensibility, to draw the contours of it, to recount its history, requires a deep sympathy modified by revulsion.

Though I'm speaking about sensibility only—and about a sensibility that, among other things, converts the serious into the frivolous—these are grave matters. Most people think of sensibility or taste as the realm of purely subjective preferences, those mysterious

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attractions, mainly sensual, that have not been brought under the sovereignty of reason. They *allow* that considerations of taste play a part in their reactions to people and to works of art. But this is naive. And even worse. To patronize the faculty of taste is to patronize oneself. For taste governs every free—as opposed to rote—human response. Nothing is more decisive. There is taste in people, visual taste, taste in emotion—and there is taste in acts, taste in morality. Intelligence, as well, is really a kind of taste: taste in ideas. (One of the facts to be reckoned with is that taste tends to develop very unevenly. It's rare that the same person has good visual taste *and* good taste in people *and* good taste in ideas.)

There is no system in taste, and no proofs. But there is something like a logic of taste: the consistent sensibility which underlies and gives rise to a certain taste. A sensibility is almost, but not quite, ineffable. Any sensibility which can be crammed into the mold of a system, or handled with the rough tools of proof, is no longer a sensibility at all. It has hardened into an idea. . . .

To snare a sensibility in words, especially one that is alive and powerful,[1] one must be tentative and nimble. The form of jottings, rather than an essay (with its claim to a linear, consecutive argument), seemed more appropriate for getting down something of this particularly fugitive sensibility or taste. It's embarrassing to be solemn and treatise-like about Camp. One runs the risk of having, oneself, produced a very inferior piece of Camp.

These notes are for Oscar Wilde.

> "One should either be a work of art, or wear a work of art."
>
> —*Phrases & Philosophies for the Use of the Young*

1. To start very generally: Camp is a certain mode of esthetic-ism. It is *one* way of seeing the world as an esthetic phenomenon.

1. The sensibility of an era is not only its most decisive, but also its most perishable, aspect. One may capture the ideas (intellectual history) and the behavior (social history) of an epoch without ever touching upon the sensibility or taste which informed those ideas, that behavior. Rare are those historical studies—like Huizinga on the late Middle Ages, Febvre on 16th century France—which do tell us something about the sensibility of the period.

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That way, the way of Camp, is not in terms of beauty, but in terms of style.

2. To emphasize style is to slight content, or to introduce an attitude which is neutral with respect to content. It goes without saying that the Camp sensibility is disengaged, depoliticized—or at least apolitical.

3. Not only is there a Camp vision, a Camp way of looking at things. Camp is as well a quality discoverable in objects and the behavior of persons. There are "campy" movies, clothes, furniture, popular songs, novels, people, buildings. . . . This distinction is important. True, the Camp eye has the power to transform experience. But not everything can be seen as Camp. It's not *all* in the eye of the beholder.

4. Random examples of items which are part of the canon of Camp:

Tiffany lamps
Scopitone films
The Brown Derby restaurant on Sunset Boulevard in LA
The Enquirer, headlines and stories
Aubrey Beardsley drawings
Swan Lake
Bellini's operas
Visconti's direction of *Salome* and *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*
certain turn-of-the-century picture postcards
Schoedsack's *King Kong*
the Cuban pop singer La Lupe
Lynn Ward's novel in woodcuts, *God's Man*
women's clothes of the twenties (feather boas, fringed and beaded dresses, etc.)
the novels of Ronald Firbank and Ivy Compton-Burnett
stag movies seen without lust

5. Camp taste has an affinity for certain arts rather than others. Clothes, furniture, all the elements of visual decor, for instance, make up a large part of Camp. For Camp art is often decorative art, emphasizing texture, sensuous surface, and style at the expense of content. Concert music, though, because it is contentless, is rarely Camp. It offers no opportunity, say, for a contrast between silly or extravagant content and rich form. . . . Sometimes whole art forms become saturated with Camp. Classical ballet,

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opera, movies have seemed so for a long time. In the last two years, so has popular music (post rock 'n' roll, what the French call *yé yé*). And movie criticism (like lists of "The 10 Best Bad Movies I Have Seen") is probably the greatest popularizer of Camp taste today, because most people still go to the movies in a high-spirited and unpretentious way.

6. There is a sense in which it is correct to say: "It's too good to be Camp." Or "too important," not marginal enough. (More on this later.) Thus, the personality and many of the works of Jean Cocteau are Camp, but not those of André Gide; the operas of Richard Strauss, but not those of Wagner; concoctions of Tin Pan Alley and Liverpool, but not jazz. Many examples of Camp are things which, from a "serious" point of view, are either bad art or kitsch. Not all though. Camp is not necessarily bad art. But more on that later, too.

> "The more we study Art, the less we care for Nature."
>
> —*The Decay of Lying*

7. All Camp objects, and persons, contain a large element of artifice. Nothing in nature can be campy. . . . Nothing rural, either. Campy objects are urban. (Yet, they often have a serenity—or a naiveté—which is the equivalent of pastoral. A great deal of Camp suggests Empson's phrase, "urban pastoral.")

8. Camp is a vision of the world in terms of style—but a particular kind of style. It is the love of the exaggerated, the "off," of things-being-what-they-are-not. The best example is in Art Nouveau, the most typical and fully developed Camp style. Art Nouveau objects, typically, make one thing into something else. Generic examples: the lighting fixtures in the form of flowering plants, the living room which is really a grotto. A particular example: the Paris Metro entrances designed by Hector Guimard in the late 1890's in the form of cast-iron orchid stalks.

9. As a taste in persons, Camp responds particularly to the markedly attenuated and to the strongly exaggerated. The androgyne is certainly one of the great images of Camp sensibility. Examples: the swooning slim sinuous figures of pre-Raphaelite painting and poetry in the Art Nouveau style, the thin, flowing, sexless bodies in

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prints and posters, presented in relief on lamps and ashtrays; the haunting androgynous vacancy behind the perfect beauty of Greta Garbo. Here, Camp taste draws on a mostly unacknowledged truth of taste: the most refined form of sexual attractiveness (as well as the most refined form of sexual pleasure) consists in going against the grain of one's sex. What is most beautiful in virile men is something feminine; what is most beautiful in feminine women is something masculine. . . . Allied to the Camp taste for the androgynous is something that seems quite different but isn't: a relish for the exaggeration of sexual characteristics and personality mannerisms. For obvious reasons, the best examples that can be cited are movie stars. The corny flamboyant femaleness of Jayne Mansfield, Gina Lollobrigida, Jane Russell, Virginia Mayo; the exaggerated he-manness of Steve Reeves, Victor Mature. The great stylists of temperament and mannerism, like Bette Davis, Barbara Stanwyck, Tallulah Bankhead, Edwige Feuillière.

10. Camp sees everything in quotation marks. It's not a lamp, but a "lamp"; not a woman, but a "woman." To perceive Camp in objects and persons is to understand Being as Playing a Role. It is the farthest extension, in sensibility, of the metaphor of life as theater.

11. Camp is the triumph of the epicene style. (The convertibility of "boy" and "girl," "person" and "thing.") But all style is, ultimately, epicene. "Life" is not stylish. Neither is nature.

12. The question isn't, "Why travesty, impersonation, theatricality?" The question is, rather, "When does travesty, impersonation, theatricality acquire the special flavor of Camp?" Why is the atmosphere of Shakespeare's comedies (*As You Like It,* etc.) not epicene, while that of *Der Rosenkavalier* is?

13. The dividing line seems to fall in the eighteenth century; that's where the origins of Camp taste are to be found (Gothic novels, Chinoiserie, caricature, artificial ruins, and so forth.) But the relation to nature was quite different then. In the eighteenth century, people of taste either patronized nature (Strawberry Hill) or attempted to remake it into something artificial (Versailles). They also indefatigably patronized the past. Today's Camp taste effaces nature, or else contradicts it outright. And the relation of Camp taste to the past is extremely sentimental.

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14. A pocket history of Camp might, of course, begin farther back—with the mannerist artists like Pontormo and Caravaggio; or the extraordinarily theatrical painting of Georges de la Tour. Still, the soundest period to start seems to be the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, because of its extraordinary feeling for artifice, for surface, for symmetry, its taste for the picturesque and the thrilling, its stylish conventions for representing instant feeling and the total presence of character—the epigram and the rhymed couplet (in words), the flourish (in gesture and in music). The late seventeenth and early eighteenth century is the great period of Camp: Pope, Congreve, Walpole, etc., but not Swift; much of Mozart; *les précieux* in France; the rococo churches of Munich. But in the nineteenth century, what had been distributed throughout all of high culture now becomes a special taste; it takes on overtones of the acute, the esoteric, the perverse. Confining the story to England alone, Camp continues wanly through nineteenth century estheticism (Burne-Jones, Pater, Ruskin, Tennyson), it emerges full-blown with the Art Nouveau movement in the visual and decorative arts, and it finds its conscious ideologists in such "wits" as Wilde and Firbank.

15. Of course, to say all these things are Camp is not to argue they are simply that. A full analysis of Art Nouveau, for instance, would scarcely equate it with Camp. But such an analysis would not scant what in Art Nouveau allows it to be experienced as Camp. For Art Nouveau is full of "content," even of a political-moral sort; it was a revolutionary movement in the arts, spurred on by a utopian vision (somewhere between William Morris and the Bauhaus group) of an organic politics and taste. Yet there is also something in the Art Nouveau objects which suggests a disengaged, purely esthetic, and unserious vision. This tells us something important about Art Nouveau—and about what the lens of Camp, which blocks out content, is.

16. Thus, the Camp sensibility is one that is alive to a double sense in which some things can be taken. But this is not the familiar split-level construction of a literal meaning, on the one hand, and a symbolic meaning, on the other. It is the difference, rather, between the thing as meaning something, anything, and the thing as pure style.

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17. This comes out clearly in the most vulgar use of the word Camp, as a verb, "to camp," something that people do. To camp is a mode of seduction—one which employs mannerisms susceptible of a double interpretation; gestures full of duplicity, with a witty meaning for the cognoscenti and another, more solemn, for outsiders. Equally and by extension, when the word becomes a noun, when a person or a thing is "a camp," a duplicity is involved. Behind the "straight" public sense in which the thing can be taken, one has found a private witty experience of the thing.

> "To be natural is such a very difficult pose to keep up."
> —*An Ideal Husband*

18. One must distinguish between naive and deliberate Camp. Pure Camp is always naive. Camp which knows itself to be Camp is "camping," which is usually less satisfying.

19. The pure examples of Camp are unintentional; they are dead serious. The Art Nouveau craftsman who makes a lamp with a snake coiled around it is not kidding, nor is he trying to be charming; he is saying, in all earnestness: Voilà! the Orient! Pure Camp—for instance, the numbers devised for the Warner Brothers musicals of the early thirties (*42nd Street*; *The Golddiggers of 1933*; . . . *of 1935*; . . . *of 1937*; etc.) by Busby Berkeley—does not *mean* to be funny. Camping—say, the plays of Noel Coward—does. It doesn't seem possible that much of the traditional opera repertoire could be such satisfying Camp if the melodramatic absurdities of most opera plots hadn't been taken seriously by their composers. One doesn't need to know the artist's private intentions. The work tells all. (Compare a typical nineteenth-century opera with Samuel Barber's *Vanessa,* a piece of manufactured, calculated Camp, and the difference is clear.)

20. Probably, intending to be campy is always harmful. The perfection of *Trouble in Paradise* and *The Maltese Falcon,* among the greatest Camp movies ever made, comes from the effortless smooth way in which tone is maintained. This is not so with such famous would-be Camp films of the fifties as *All About Eve* and *Beat the Devil.* These more recent movies have their fine moments, but the first is so slick and the second so hysterical; they want so

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badly to be campy that they're continually losing the beat. . . . Perhaps, though, it's not so much a question of the unintended effect versus the conscious intention, as of the delicate relation between parody and self-parody in Camp. The films of Hitchcock are a showcase for this problem. When self-parody lacks ebullience but instead reveals (even sporadically) a contempt for one's themes and one's materials—as in *To Catch a Thief, Rear Window, North By Northwest*—the results are forced and heavy-handed, rarely Camp. Perfect Camp—a movie like Carné's *Drôle de Drame*; the film performances of Mae West and Edward Everett Horton; chunks of the Goon Show—even when it rests on self-parody, reeks of self-love.

21. So, again, Camp rests on innocence. That means, Camp discloses innocence, but also, when it can, corrupts it. Objects, being objects, don't change when they are singled out by the Camp vision. Persons, however, respond to their audiences. Persons begin "camping": Mae West, Bea Lillie, La Lupe, Tallulah Bankhead in *Lifeboat*, Bette Davis in *All About Eve*. (Persons can even be induced to camp without their knowing it. Consider the way Fellini got Anita Ekberg to parody herself in *La Dolce Vita*.)

22. Considered a little less strictly, Camp is either completely naive or else wholly conscious (when one plays at being campy). An example of the latter: Wilde's epigrams themselves.

> "It's absurd to divide people into good and bad. People are either charming or tedious."
>
> —*Lady Windemere's Fan*

23. In naive, or pure, Camp, the essential element is seriousness, a seriousness that fails. Of course, not all seriousness that fails can be redeemed as Camp. Only that which has the proper mixture of the exaggerated, the fantastic, the passionate, and the naive.

24. When something is just bad (rather than Camp), it's often because it is too mediocre in its ambition. The artist hasn't attempted to do anything really outlandish. (It's too much," "It's fantastic," "It's not to be believed," are standard phrases of Camp enthusiasm.)

25. The hallmark of Camp is the spirit of extravagance. Camp is a woman walking around in a dress made of three million feathers.

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Camp is the paintings of Carlo Crivelli, with their real real jewels and *trompe-l'oeil* insects and cracks in the masonry. Camp is the outrageous estheticism of Von Sternberg's six American movies with Dietrich, all six but especially the last, *The Devil Is a Woman*. . . . In Camp there is often something *démesuré* in the quality of the ambition, not only in the style of the work itself. Gaudi's lurid and beautiful buildings in Barcelona are Camp not only because of their style but because they reveal—most notably in the Cathedral of the Sagrada Familia—the ambition on the part of one man to do what it takes a whole generation, a whole culture to accomplish.

26. Camp is art that proposes itself seriously, but cannot be taken altogether seriously because it is "too much." *Titus Andronicus* and *Strange Interlude* are almost Camp, or could be played as Camp. The public manner and rhetoric of de Gaulle, often, are pure Camp.

27. A work can come close to Camp, but not make it, because it succeeds. Eisenstein's films aren't Camp because, despite all exaggeration, they do succeed (dramatically) without surplus. If they were a little more "off," they could be great Camp—particularly *Ivan the Terrible I & II*. The same for Blake's drawings and paintings, weird and mannered as they are. They aren't Camp; though Art Nouveau, influenced by Blake, is.

What is extravagant in an inconsistent or unpassionate way is not Camp. Neither can anything be Camp that does not seem to spring from an irrepressible, a virtually uncontrolled sensibility. Without passion, one gets pseudo-Camp—what is merely decorative, safe, in a word, chic. On the barren edge of Camp lie a number of beautiful things: the sleek fantasies of Dali, the haute couture preciosity of Albicocco's *The Girl With the Golden Eyes*. But the two things—Camp and preciosity—must not be confused.

28. Again, Camp is the attempt to do something extraordinary. But extraordinary in the sense, often, of being special, glamorous. (The curved line, the extravagant gesture.) Not extraordinary merely in the sense of effort. Ripley's Believe-It-Or-Not items are rarely campy. These items, either natural oddities (the two headed rooster, the eggplant in the shape of a cross) or else the products of immense labor (the man who walked from here to China on his hands, the woman who engraved the New Testament on the head of a pin),

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lack the visual reward—the glamor, the theatricality—that marks off certain extravagances as Camp.

29. The reason a movie like *On the Beach,* a book like *Winesburg, Ohio,* are bad to the point of being laughable, but not bad to the point of being enjoyable is that they are too dogged and pretentious. They lack fantasy. There is Camp in such bad movies as *The Prodigal* and *Samson and Delilah,* the series of Italian color spectacles about the super-hero Maciste, numerous Japanese science fiction films (*Rodan, The Mysterians, The H-Man*) because, in their relative unpretentiousness and vulgarity, they are more extreme and irresponsible in their fantasy—and therefore touching and quite enjoyable.

30. Of course, the canon of Camp can change. Time has a great deal to do with it. Time may enhance what seems simply dogged or lacking in fantasy now because we are too close to it, because it resembles too closely our own everyday fantasies, the fantastic nature of which we don't perceive. We are better able to enjoy a fantasy as fantasy when it is not our own.

31. This is why so many of the objects prized by Camp taste are old-fashioned, out-of-date, *démodé*. It's not a love of the old as such. It's simply that the process of ageing, or deterioration, provides the necessary detachment—or arouses a necessary sympathy. When the theme is important, and contemporary, the failure of a work of art may make us indignant. Time can change that. Time liberates the work of art from moral relevance, delivering it over to the Camp sensibility. . . . Another effect: time contracts the sphere of banality. (Banality is, strictly speaking, always a category of the contemporary.) What was banal can, with the passage of time, become fantastic. Many people who listen with delight to the style of Rudy Vallee revived by the English pop group, The Temperance Seven, would have been driven up the wall by Rudy Vallee in his heyday.

Thus, things are campy, not when they become old—but when we become less involved in them, and can enjoy, instead of be frustrated by, the failure of the attempt. But the effect of time is unpredictable. Maybe Rod Steiger's acting will seem as Camp some day as Ruby Keeler's does now—or as Sarah Bernhardt's does, in the films she made at the end of her career. And maybe not.

32. Camp is the glorification of "character." The statement

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is of no importance—except, of course, to the person (Loie Fuller, Gaudi, Cecil B. De Mille, Crivelli, De Gaulle, etc.) who makes it. What the Camp eye appreciates is the unity, the force of the person. In every move Martha Graham makes she's being Martha Graham, etc., etc. . . . This is clear in the case of the great serious idol of Camp taste, Greta Garbo. Garbo's incompetence (at the least, lack of depth) as an *actress* enhances her beauty. She's always herself.

33. What Camp taste responds to is "instant character"; and, conversely, what it is not stirred by is the sense of the development of character. (This is, of course, very eighteenth-century.) Character is understood as a state of continual incandescence—a person being one, very intense thing. This taste in character is a key element of the theatricalization of experience embodied in the Camp sensibility. And it helps account for the fact that opera and ballet are experienced as such rich treasures of Camp, for neither of these forms can easily do justice to the complexity of human nature. Wherever there is development of character, Camp is reduced. Among operas, for example, *La Traviata* (which has some small development of character) is less campy than *Il Trovatore* (which has none).

> "Life is too important a thing ever to talk seriously about it."
>
> —*Vera, Or the Nihilists*

34. Camp taste turns its back on the good-bad axis of ordinary esthetic judgment. Camp doesn't reverse things. It doesn't argue that the good is bad, or the bad is good. What it does is to offer for art (and life) a different—a supplementary—set of standards.

35. Ordinarily we value a work of art because of the seriousness and dignity of what it achieves. We value it because it succeeds, in being what it is and, presumably, in fulfilling the intention that lies behind it. We assume a proper, that is to say, straightforward relation between intention and performance. By such standards, we appraise *The Iliad,* Aristophanes' plays, "The Art of the Fugue," *Middlemarch,* the paintings of Rembrandt, Chartres, the poetry of Donne, *The Divine Comedy,* Beethoven's quartets, etc., etc.; and—among people—Socrates, Jesus, St. Francis, Napoleon, Savonarola, and so forth. In short, the pantheon of high culture: truth, beauty, and seriousness.

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36. But there are other creative sensibilities besides the seriousness (both tragic and comic) of high culture and of the high style of evaluating people. And one cheats oneself, as a human being, if one has respect only for the style of high culture, whatever else one may do or feel on the sly.

For instance, there is the kind of seriousness whose trademark is anguish, cruelty, derangement. Here we do accept a disparity between intention and result. I am speaking, obviously, of a style of personal existence as well as of a style in art; but the examples had best come from art—Bosch, De Sade, Rimbaud, Jarry, Kafka, Artaud, most of the important works of art of the twentieth century, that is, art whose goal is not that of creating harmonies but of overstraining the medium and introducing more and more violent, and unresolvable, subject matter. This sensibility also insists on the principle that an *oeuvre* in the old sense (again, in art, but also in life) is not possible, only fragments. . . . Obviously, different standards apply here than to traditional high culture. Something is good not because it is achieved, but because another kind of truth about the human situation, another experience of what it is to be human—in short, another valid sensibility—is being revealed.

And third among the great creative sensibilities is Camp, the sensibility of failed seriousness, of the theatricalization of experience. Camp refuses both the harmonies of traditional seriousness, and the risks of fully identifying with extreme states of feeling.

37. The first sensibility, that of high culture, is basically moralistic. The second sensibility, that of extreme states of feeling, represented in much contemporary "avant-garde" art, gains power by a tension between moral and esthetic passion. The third, Camp, is wholly esthetic.

38. Camp is the consistently esthetic experience of the world. It incarnates a victory of style over content, of esthetics over morality, of irony over tragedy.

39. Camp and tragedy are antitheses. There is seriousness in Camp (seriousness in the degree of the artist's involvement), and, very often, pathos. The excruciating is also one of the tonalities of Camp; it is the quality of excruciation in much of Henry James (for instance, *The Europeans, The Awkward Age, The Wings of the Dove*) that is responsible for the large element of Camp in his writings. But there is never, never tragedy.

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40. Style is everything. Genet's ideas, for instance, are very Camp. Genet's statement that "the only criterion of an act is its elegance"[2] is virtually interchangeable, as a statement, with Wilde's "in matters of great importance, the vital element is not sincerity, but style." But what counts, finally, is the style in which ideas are held. The ideas about morality and politics in, say, *Lady Windemere's Fan* and in *Major Barbara* are Camp, but not just because of the nature of the ideas themselves. It is those ideas, held in a special playful way. The Camp ideas in *Notre Dame des Fleurs* are maintained too grimly—and the writing itself is too successfully elevated and serious—for Genet's books to be Camp.

41. The whole point of Camp is to dethrone the serious. Camp is playful, anti-serious. More precisely, Camp involves a new, more complex relation to "the serious." One can be serious about the frivolous, frivolous about the serious.

42. One is drawn to Camp when one realizes that "sincerity" is not enough. Sincerity can be simple philistinism, intellectual narrowness.

43. The traditional means for going beyond straight seriousness—irony, satire—seem feeble today, inadequate to the culturally oversaturated medium in which contemporary sensibility is schooled. Camp introduces a new standard: the idea of style, theatricality.

44. Camp proposes a comic vision of the world. But not a bitter or polemical comedy. If tragedy is an experience of hyperinvolvement, comedy is an experience of underinvolvement, of detachment.

> "I adore simple pleasures, they are the last refuge of the complex."
> —*A Woman of No Importance*

45. Detachment is the prerogative of an elite; and as the dandy is the nineteenth century's surrogate for the aristocrat in matters of culture, so Camp is the modern dandyism. Camp is the answer to the problem: how to be a dandy in the age of mass culture.

46. The dandy was overbred. His posture was disdain, or else *ennui*. He sought rare sensations, undefiled by mass appreciation. (Models: Des Esseintes in Huysmans' *Là Bas, Marius the Epicurean*, Valéry's *Monsieur Teste*.) He was dedicated to "good taste."

2. Sartre's gloss on this in *Saint Genet* is: "Elegance is the quality of conduct which transforms the greatest amount of being into appearing."

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The connoisseur of Camp has found more ingenious pleasures. Not in Latin poetry and rare wines and velvet jackets, but in the coarsest commonest pleasures, in the arts of the masses. Mere use does not defile the objects of his pleasure, since he learns to possess them in a rare way. Camp—Dandyism in the age of mass culture—makes no distinction between the unique object and the mass-produced object. Camp taste transcends the nausea of the replica.

47. Wilde himself is a transitional figure. The man who, when he first came to London sported a velvet beret, lace shirts, velveteen knee-breeches and black silk stockings, could never depart too far in his life from the pleasures of the old-style dandy; this conservatism is reflected in *The Picture of Dorian Grey*. But many of his attitudes suggest something more modern. It was Wilde who formulated an important element of the Camp sensibility—the equivalence of all objects—when he announced his intention of "living up" to his blue-and-white china, or declared that a doorknob could be as admirable as a painting. When he emphasized the importance of the necktie, the boutonniere, the chair, Wilde was anticipating the democratic *esprit* of Camp.

48. The old-style dandy hated vulgarity. The new-style dandy, the lover of Camp, is a lover of vulgarity. Where the dandy would be continually offended or bored, the connoisseur of Camp is continually amused, delighted. The dandy held a perfumed handkerchief to his nostrils and was liable to swoon; the connoisseur of Camp sniffs the stink and prides himself on his strong nerves.

49. It is a feat, of course. A feat goaded on, in the last analysis, by the threat of boredom. The relation between boredom and Camp taste cannot be overestimated. Camp taste is by its nature possible only in affluent societies, in societies or circles capable of experiencing the psychopathology of affluence.

> "What is abnormal in Life stands in normal relations to Art. It is the only thing in Life that stands in normal relations to Art."
>
> —*A Few Maxims for the Instruction of the Over-Educated.*

50. Aristocracy is a position vis-à-vis culture (as well as vis-à-vis power), and the history of Camp taste is part of the history of

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snob taste. But since no authentic aristocrats in the old sense exist today to sponsor special tastes, who is the bearer of this taste? Answer: an improvised self-elected class, mainly homosexuals, who constitute themselves as aristocrats of taste.

51. The peculiar relation between Camp taste and homosexuality has to be explained. While it's not true that Camp taste *is* homosexual taste, there is no doubt a peculiar affinity and overlap. Not all liberals are Jews, but Jews have shown a peculiar affinity for liberal and reformist causes. So, not all homosexuals have Camp taste. But homosexuals, by and large, constitute the vanguard—and the most articulate audience—of Camp. (The analogy is not frivolously chosen. Jews and homosexuals are the two outstanding creative minorities in contemporary western culture. Creative, that is, in the truest sense: they are creators of sensibilities. The two pioneering forces of modern sensibility are Jewish moral seriousness and homosexual estheticism and irony.)

52. The reason for the flourishing of the aristocratic posture among homosexuals also seems to parallel the Jewish case. For every sensibility is self-serving to the group that promotes it. Jewish liberalism is a gesture of self-legitimization. So Camp taste which definitely has something propagandistic about it. Of course, the propaganda is in just the opposite direction. The Jews pinned their hopes for integrating into modern society on promoting the moral sense. Homosexuals have pinned their integration into society on promoting the esthetic sense. Camp is a solvent of morality. It neutralizes moral indignation, sponsors playfulness.

53. Nevertheless, even though homosexuals have been its vanguard, Camp taste is much more than homosexual taste. Obviously, its metaphor of life as theater is peculiarly suited as a justification and projection of a certain aspect of the situation of homosexuals. (The Camp insistence on not being "serious," on playing, also connects with the homosexual's desire to remain youthful.) Yet one feels that if homosexuals hadn't more or less invented Camp, someone else would. For the aristocratic posture with relation to culture cannot die, though it may persist only in increasingly arbitrary and ingenious ways. Camp is (to repeat) the relation to style in a time in which the adoption of style—as such—has become altogether questionable. (In the modern era, each new style, unless frankly anachronistic, has come on the scene as an anti-style.)

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"One must have a heart of stone to read the death of Little Nell without laughing."

—*In conversation.*

54. The experiences of Camp are based on the great discovery that the sensibility of high culture has no monopoly upon refinement. Camp asserts that good taste is not simply good taste; that there exists, indeed, a good taste of bad taste. (See Genet on this in *Notre Dame des Fleurs.*) This discovery is very liberating. The man who insists on high and serious pleasures is depriving himself of pleasure; he continually restricts what he can enjoy; in the constant exercise of his good taste he will eventually price himself out of the market, so to speak. Here Camp taste supervenes upon good taste as a daring and witty hedonism. It makes the man of good taste cheerful, where before he ran the risk of being chronically frustrated. It is good for the digestion.

55. Camp taste is, above all, a mode of enjoyment, of appreciation—not judgement. Camp is generous. It wants to enjoy. It only seems like malice, cynicism. (Or, if it is cynicism, it's not a ruthless but a sweet cynicism.) Camp taste doesn't propose that it's in bad taste to be serious; it doesn't sneer at someone who succeeds in being seriously dramatic. What it does is to find the success in certain passionate failures.

56. Camp taste is a kind of love, love for human nature. It relishes, rather than judges, the little triumphs and awkward intensities of "character." . . . Camp taste identifies with what it is enjoying. People who share this sensibility are not laughing at the thing they label as "a camp," they're enjoying it. Camp is a *tender* feeling.

(Here, compare Camp with much of Pop art, which—when it is not just Camp—embodies an attitude which is related, but still very different. Pop Art is more flat and more dry, more serious, more detached, ultimately nihilistic.)

57. Camp taste nourishes itself on the love that has gone into certain objects and personal styles. The absence of this love is the reason why such kitsch items as *Peyton Place* and the Tishman Building can't be Camp.

58. The ultimate Camp statement: it's good *because* it's awful. . . . But one can't always say that. Only under certain conditions, which I've tried to sketch in these notes.

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Muriel Spark

FOUR POEMS

SHIPTON-UNDER-WYCHWOOD

Under Wychwood the growth and undergrowth
contend and do not mind how things exceptional
meander into landscape. They are drenched under
and under the repetitive green at last.
Fetched into chastity are fond extravagant
and noticeable doings and undertakings
whereover all the rhythms of Cotswold ride.

Ride, and have struck an ever-receding camp
over and over again, redundant time and tenses
disposing of themselves. What horses overtake them?
and what will become of the rare and royal hunters?
Prebend plunges over Plantagenet; it is all
over then, with the legions of Rome before
finality, split-hooved, has taken over
Shipton under the forest, concealed in summer.

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BLUEBELL AMONG THE SABLES

The visitor came clothed with sables,
My dark and social friend.
The afternoon prospered after its kind.
But they bore me, those intimate parliaments,
Those tea-times wear my heart away.

So I took half my pleasure in the sables
Which flowed across her arm, the chair, the floor,
Sleek and fathomless like contemplative,
Living animals, the deep elect,
In ceremonious most limp obedience.

But the dark skins did move, she felt them creep:
"My God! My sables!"
Indeed they were alive with a new life,
The sombre swiftly shot with quick and silver
Fur within fur. It was Bluebell, my beautiful,
My small and little cat pounding the sables.
Flat on her spine she tumbled them,
Shaking their kindly tails between her teeth.

"My furs! Your cat!" . . .
I said, "No need for alarm.
Those dead pelts can't cause Bluebell any harm."
(I am a human female and do not possess any sables.)
Poor soul, this put her in the wrong,
As one who somehow fails the higher vision,
She was meek: "They cost the earth, my furs."
I stroked the comical creature, she the sables,
And all came even.

For she said there was no damage, no damage.
It may be she had profit of the event;

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As for myself that moment was well spent
When I saw Bluebell pummelling the sables.

I have the image, the gratuitous image
Miserly seized: the sable wonders glowing,
An order of the profound earth, of roots
And minerals evolved in civil strands,
Defined in which, the sprite, like air and like
A dawn asperges, green-eyed Bluebell plying
The sensuous fabric with her shining pads.

THE FALL

The European Bison fell from grace.
So did the white-tailed Gnu.
Likewise the Blesbok, as also the Mountain Zebra.
The Giant Tortoise must have sinned too.

Everyone knows about the Dodo;
The same goes for the Great Auk.
The inoffensive Okapi's crime
Was trying to be other beasts at the same time.
And there is the case of the Blue-Buck.

They all came to a halt and are dissolved in mystery.
Who remembers, now, Steller's cullionly Sea-Cow?
It, too, through its innocent fault
Failed the finals in history.

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CONVERSATIONS

Two or three on the winter pavement talking,
One or two in the stubble field,
Idle, concerning miracles.

Voices are butter, but the eyes overtly
Detest another's dubious lips;
Eyes are blades where fancy breeds.

In boredom breeds, meanwhile remains to each
Enemy his friend, to every lying
Tongue an angel apiece.

The conversation therefore is in heaven
Here on the streets of understanding
Here in the fields of bread,

When men are magic and air their advocates
Bide by the human grain and yet,
Though these offences needs must come,
Agree, sincere as light.

Blessed is the child of indiscretion talking,
And the orphan of indignation,
And before their Father's face, their conversations
Continually dancing.

Blessed are sons enticed to sea, and the mother
Constrained by wonder and by sign;
Their angels cover the face of the water
And the water singeth a quiet tune.

Two or three must argue these contentions;
One or two in a winter season
Herein long since have plucked a sentiment or scandal.
But our conversation is in heaven.

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Max Kozloff

ART AND THE NEW YORK AVANT-GARDE

Art in the sixties belongs to an American generation still under forty, aware of its origins in Abstract-Expressionism, but committed to a development that has profoundly altered the look of pictorial and three dimensional activity. And more important, the environment of art has been practically reversed. The humanistic context within which visual art has been most frequently experienced and judged is no longer relevant. Painting as the expression of its author's vision or emotion, or paintstrokes as the last uniquely individual handywork in man-made objects, are notions which are more and more discredited. Equivocation of form and content is now the principle of an art which strangely begins to evoke our condition and our times. Even when one is dealing with painting that is decidedly allusive, if not literal in the objects and images it depicts, one cannot respond as one does to representational art. The story of this metamorphosis, and what its implications are for the future, is the story of the New York avant-garde of the last seven years.

The *eminence grise* of post Abstract-Expressionist art is Jasper Johns. In 1958 he first showed his celebrated "targets" (target forms on canvas, above which were horizontal compartments containing plaster casts of parts of the human body). At that point, a predicament in criticism materialized and American art was put on its present path. No one could have imagined then how illustrative of the future were his schemata, which figuratively seemed to be making a target of fragmentation of the whole man and the disintegration of a continuous organic process of vision and construction. That Johns himself explained the invention of his flags as the outcome of a dream in which he had seen that motif clarioned, is hardly a clarification. No Abstract-Expres-

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sionist, after all, ever claimed to have gotten his ideas from dreams, least of all ideas as irritatingly commonplace as these. The suggestion of imagery received automatically and unconsciously had an implausibility that contrasted with the actual product, than which nothing could be more ordinary. With his first public showing at the Castelli Gallery in 1958, the critical term Neo-Dada was created.

If one examines this idea in the light of Johns's work since then, the Dada element is, I think, only half applicable. But this is already fifty percent more than is acceptable for the many who eventually came to reject the entire label. The single, continuing, undeniable principle of Johns is his practice of "displacement"—the transposition of an idea, motif, or object from one context to another. Johns does not undertake a single work without operating by displacement and attempting to widen its possibilities. Furthermore, it is necessary that the one context "art," or at least, recent art, be fixed, while the other context varies. By selecting flags, targets, numbers, letters, coat hangers, maps, shadow outlines, the artist elevates the function of *choice* as the decisive imaginative act. It circumvents the original usage of the motif and opens it up to a completely different form of consumption. Johns himself has said, "I am concerned with a thing's not being what it was, with its becoming something other than what it is, with any moment in which one identifies a thing precisely and with the slipping away of that moment. . . ." The more this aim brings him to emphasize the displacement as the transforming agent (as opposed to execution), the more a Dadaist he is, the more, in fact, he becomes the single most important inheritor of Marcel Duchamp. Indeed, Johns is responsible for reintroducing Duchamp as the most potent influence on the younger generation of American artists.

Still, he is singularly unfaithful to his mentor. Not only because his themes are different, and his outlook more public, but because he conceives his work primarily as a painter (which he can't help being), does he part ways with Duchamp, particularly the Duchamp who has striven successfully to repudiate his own painterly gifts. In Johns there is an involvement with paint handling that comes overtly out of de Kooning and Philip Guston. Thus, even though one of his primary accomplishments has been to formulate predictable and reproducible structures for the picture, he contradicts the nature of those structures by implementing them unpredictably, and, what's more, with a freedom gained by Action painting. Further, when Johns displays patinaed bronze casts of flashbulbs and lightbulbs, he joins and yet opposes the things in themselves with a way they might be represented, not

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merely produced. This too, relates to Dada, except that Johns's pictorial activity still pumps its own sponaneity into the construct, and thus affirms the art against which he would otherwise seem to be reacting.

Johns is no doubt questioning the nature of reality by juxtaposing the concrete paint strokes with the tangible artifact, and this suggests that neither paint strokes nor artifacts are enough to complete the statement which is for him the goal of the created work. Rather it is the viewer who is left with the task of completion, but unfortunately without sufficient visual clues to discharge it. Or perhaps, with too many. Thus Johns will paint a map of the United States as if it were a landscape, stencil the names of the states as if they were on packing cases, and color the stencil in hues that "jump" or recede uncontrasted in their separate areas.

A Johns painting is a series of cancellations as much as it is a sequence of additions. One of his typical procedures introduces a system which is perfect understandable, and then rules out whatever legibility it had by adding some kind of limitation or excess in its operation. As an example, he will superimpose the numbers from 0 to 9 over each other, arriving at a kind of planned confusion. *With Johns, object presented, visual effect, and final content by no means coincide.*

However he may pry apart relationships which are usually laminated by esthetic causality, Johns does not present the spectator with a disunified painting. On the contrary, one is made to understand that the work is deliberately open to interpretations, that it *wants* to be viewed in as many ways as possible. Such is his concentration on alternative readings that subjects and handling are not so much subordinate in importance, but become relatively stabilized and neutralized conventions which physically hold in place the mental polarities which make up the experience. Unlike Duchamp's, the appearances which we recognize in Johns have no private or special character, nor do they contain any sociological commentary. Johns invents or sometimes evokes connections: he never "pictures" them. In this, he oddly seems to agree with the rationale of, say, an Abstract-Expressionist like Hans Hofmann, when the latter says that "it is not what a form is, but what a form does, which is important." With Johns, however, displacements, mirror effects, identity changes, and physical compressions are substitutes for forms. Except for the fact that his relationships are not compositional, and that his paint gestures reject the emotive, Johns echoes the concern of Abstract-Expressionism to articulate the internal dynamics of vision, not merely how paintings are put together. The

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intimate, sentient, frequently grey toned pictures of Johns welcome critical analysis but remain wonderfully enigmatic.

Just the same, their historical importance has been immense. From Johns and Rauschenberg (who has an equal but considerably different form of brilliance) have issued the basic esthetic of much recent assemblage and Pop art. And Johns in particular has cast influence upon certain forms of abstraction which could never have developed without the spectacle of his contrariness. I am thinking now of the very young Frank Stella (born in 1936), who cannot be spoken of as the leader of a group but who has nevertheless crystallized a sensibility very germane to the aspirations of a number of his colleagues. Represented in the "Abstract-Expressionist and Imagist" show of the Guggenheim Museum in 1961, the "Geometric Abstraction in America" exhibition (Whitney Museum, 1962), and "Toward a New Abstraction" (Jewish Museum, 1963), Stella stood out in perverse relief, as if he were the conscience of his peers. That conscience manifested itself, apparently, in nothing more than parallel alignments of stripes, executed most often in metallic colors, separated by the tiniest channels of unprimed canvas, and contained within frames that varied from U forms to polygons, the centers most recently holed out. That Stella is a perfectly non-objective artist there can be no doubt, and that he makes of each of his pictures a solid object is equally obvious. His accent on the oddness of the shape—which destroys the picture convention of a rectangularity—the "thingness" of the paint, which suggests a substance, metal, and the width of the stretcher, three inches, all point to a view of painting as artifact.

Thus, Stella, like Johns, quite aside from simulating manufacture and seemingly abdicating a great deal of personal responsibility, operates by the principle of displacement. What is odd here is that he has been able to displace completely within the realm of abstraction. He accepts each form as it is, as unalterably real—annihilating one of the basic premises of abstraction—but does not trespass into anything in the least observed or associated. After establishing this essential paradox, Stella, now unlike Johns, persists in keeping his still point, and diminishes all possibilities of "relationships." In fact, his art concerns itself with such problems as boredom, monotony, even hypnosis (as hinted at by concentricity). By eliminating any kind of connectedness between any two areas other than what his initial choice of system predicates, Stella totally thwarts visual probing. The befuddled spectator then tries for conceptual significance, only to be warded off by the painter's purposeful blankness of mind.

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Johns operates to allow as many interpretations of his work as possible; Stella, neatly and diabolically, aims to invalidate all interpretations. If one responds to his paintings visually or formally, one is being perverse. If one rejects them on the basis of their "principle," one is being obtuse. In the end, they will not countenance being used in any way, so that our liking or disliking them is irrelevant. They are perhaps the closest that paintings have yet come to being mere objects. More importantly, because of this arrogant uselessness (purchased, however, with the most humble artisanal devotion), Stella, in my opinion, may be the first to attain an *Abstract-Dadaist* position.

Apart from Johns, there have been considerable precedents for this whole situation, precedents that go back right into the forties, and to a much older generation. In the work of three important artists who stood apart from Action Painting, artists who are called color-field painters (Rothko, Still, and Newman) lay a pictorial region—anti-Cubist, as well as gestural, but overtly chromatic—which opened up several questions to be explored. Their pictures generally consist of huge monolithic walls of color, punctuated or contained by minimal, highly generalized structures—vertical lines, horizontal layers or agitated flaked-off edges. But although still highly respected, Clyfford Still, because of his over-wrought emotionalism, and Mark Rothko, because of a hyper-individual poeticism, have both taken on an historical, and somewhat less than vital, status for young painters. The unpainterly Barnett Newman continues to be the old master and most pertinent influence upon the present abstractionists.

If one asks the question, "Why Newman?", a number of answers suggest themselves. First, he is the only one of the three whose handling is fairly even, unstressed by manual irregularity. Even the flat, smooth surfaces of Ad Reinhardt are more inflected with feeling, if not human imperfection, than Newman's. To be sure, there was a time when Newman was considered a purveyor of grand sensuous effects, an interpretation which the sheer impact of say sixty square feet of cobalt blue might well reinforce. Yet the color is not used to overwhelm the senses, so much as in its curious muteness and dumbness to shock the mind. Newman habitually gives the impression of being out of control without being in the least bit passionate. During the early fifties, it was possible to think of Newman's work, less correctly than of Rothko's and Still's, as morally activated, concerned with pruning art down to its essential flatness, but still able to make it count more than ever in the rarified air. What the color-field artists had in common with Abstract-Expressionism, after all, was this emphasis on a

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kind of heroic rhetoric. Newman's stance, I think, can now be seen as isolated from Rothko's and Still's, an attack against, rather than affirmation of, abstract art's potentialities. To illustrate, one needn't go further than the way he composes. Frequently the artist will place, far out or down towards a margin, a thin band or trimming; on a vast field, he might be said to split a hair. Pleasureless concentration on pure color, supremely illogical asymmetries of composition, rendered on a scale which the artist has allowed to be called "sublime"—these are trademarks of Newman's which have become extremely prophetic. If he is so useful to young artists, it may be because his work is so absolutist and yet so incomplete.

How Newman actually came to posit an art on such paradoxes is not very clear. Ad Reinhardt's origins, in contrast, are quite obvious. So too, is his relevance to contemporary abstraction. Now in his early fifties, Reinhardt has long been speaking in the accents of mainline European purism (deriving most saliently from the Bauhaus), which he has nevertheless managed to clothe in the austere guise of a pioneer American vanguardist. As a polemicist, Reinhardt persistently inveighs against practically every quality that promotes distinction and lends interest to the bringing together of visual form—value contrast, tactile change, spatial dynamics, and so on. But all this negativism has merely been a screen for the far less vocal protection of Reinhardt's own sense of art—manifested most typically in picture facades that seem to purvey one unitary sensation, such as of black. Only upon the most minute scrutiny, then, does one discover that this darkness yields segmental surface sheens of copper blue, green or purple. What is disturbing in Reinhardt, whether conscious on his part or not, is the dissolution of an already faintly perceived grid-like stability into the invisible. Insistently provoking the spectator to discover almost indecipherable changes (not even so much of hue as of light refraction or mineral content), he dilutes the nascent discovery in such a way that one is always finding a relationship only to be on the verge of losing it. Furthermore, it is not possible to tell whether Reinhardt is motivated by some pristine conservationism or a hostility whose overtones are by no means "pure." Certainly whatever visual play is emitted from the penumbral regions of one of his canvases comes to have an explicitly optical, rather than sensuous, value. And here, I think, in the implicitly mechanistic ambiance of Reinhardt, and in the specific discomfort and incredulity which he provokes, many younger abstractionists have assigned themselves a territory in which to move around.

Somewhere along these lines indeed, several tendencies can be

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seen to converge even as they overlap. A strictly optical shock in which the eye responds exclusively to, or at least is held to, the way a combination of two colors will "jump" in a kind of electric vibration or give off resonating after-images of a third hue—this attack typifies the work of various quite young artists such as Larry Poons, Tom Downing (a Washington, D.C. painter), Richard Anuskiewicz, and at times, Ellsworth Kelly. Compositional schemata, from meshes to polka dots are regularized in order to focus on the strictly physiological repeating activity of the color choices (say, purple against orange), *so that one is not allowed to contemplate an area or passage in itself.* Even so, the possibility of running visual charges along edges, or of stringing them by lines, let alone playing them off larger forms of every conceivable shape, demonstrates the curious future and variable range of this mode of painting. It is at once more pugnacious than any previous idiom—in its jangling discords, and in the way it compels strict responses from the eye—and more passive—in its radical suppression of human will. One's very difficulty in bridging the gap between these two extremes—now far removed from the innocent Bauhaus pedagogy from which they derive—indicates the content to which optical painting aspires.

It is in fact impossible to overlook a deliberately aberrated quality, a stunning emptiness, injected into American abstract painting of the last few years. The spectator's perpetually violated sense of proportion makes him aware of these elements. I refer here not so much to the mammoth physical scale of the present work (to which most spectators have been accustomed through Abstract-Expressionism), but to the fact that generally one element within the picture's confines has been permitted to get more or less cancerously out of hand.

Once again, much of this has its own history. Aside from the pioneer color-field artists who pretty much equated the whole pictorial zone with the artistic statement, the direction of much American painting has been toward the enlargement of a characteristic image which then fills out or leaves more slivers of the original ground showing. Between 1956 and 1959, this applied to de Kooning, Kline, Motherwell, and Gottlieb, among the older action painters, as well as to somewhat younger painters such as Frankenthaler, Jenkins, Dzubas, and Parker. A good deal of this development can be interpreted as a reaction against a vestigial appearance of drawing in painting that had otherwise rejected the tenets of drawing in favor of a totally paint-conceived form of expression. An objection of equal force, incidentally, held for brushiness which focused rather than diffused energy, and tied down

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the field of attention by the sprinkling of narcissistic "incidents." Works which attempted technical resolution of this problem by bringing the whole picture facade into homogeneous play were to be seen in the Guggenheim Museum's 1961 "Abstract-Expressionists and Imagists" show. It was understood only vaguely that a monolithic form had appeared, although it was very hard to interpret it as "event, symbol, or abstract interior" (H. H. Arnason).

No one has remarked, or at any rate remarked with enough clarity, how notably antagonistic many current forms of abstraction are. Whatever outright incident or visual behavior they present seems always at the point of vanishing or slipping off a perimeter, consequently flustering the spectator as does a picture askew on a wall. Their few contrasts, delineated forthrightly enough, are also made to seem unreasonable in their placements. But such unreason is in turn contradicted by the calm, laboriously executed uniformity of the surface. What is at stake is not merely an anti-symmetrical position (which can be perfectly well comprehended) but figurations which suggest systems, which are in the end completely alien to system. Anticipations are set up as to how to read a picture, only to be denied. Kelly, the earliest proponent of such tactics, will introduce a meandering color mass (originating in Arp) from the side in such a way that it appears to be merely the furthest excrescence of an area extending beyond the rectangle. And even when, as in Stella, the perimeters are respected, they are repeated with such a monotonous concentricity by stripes within the picture shape that the edges once again cease to have any meaning whatsoever. Untoward pressure against the margins, strongly presented forms in unstable situations, heavily saturated opaque color which remains generally inert: such are the characteristics of an abstraction which builds up considerable energy of contrast and hue with no apparent purpose other than to ignore it. One has the presentation of brilliant, emphatic, magnified, obsessing images, squeezed dry of all violence or moral fervor. Paintings by Feitelson, Liberman, and Kelly, shown in the most recent section of the Whitney's 1962 retrospective "Geometric Abstraction in America," showed a whole break in feeling with the geometrically-based tradition from which they stem, while not greatly modifying its vocabulary. The terms "hard-edge" or "Abstract-Imagist," like so many labels, fail to define a painting of lurid formal magnifications and atrophied consistency such as this. (How inadequate would be "soft-edge" as a definition of Rothko!) With increasing distinctness, such quasi-negative dims (prophesied by de Kooning's statement that "a geometric form is not necessarily clear") attract echelons of American artists.

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A third area of abstract art at the present moment is the only one which can claim some interest in delectation and sensuous pleasure. The genealogy of Morris Louis and Kenneth Noland goes back to Rothko—from whom comes their essentially chromatic way of seeing things, as well as from Helen Frankenthaler—to whom they owe their initiating techniques of splatter and transparent paint weaving. During the mid-fifties, Louis, in Washington, D.C., produced a number of enormous color abstractions by laying transparent rivers of acrylic paint over unprimed canvas into which the paint soaked to give a dyed effect. This latter is the characteristic embodiment of a painting which came to look substanceless and which had a distinctly orphic or lyric potentiality (in Louis particularly splendid), before emblematic conventions, in the shape of chevrons and stripes, took it over. In its iconic clarity, such work as Louis's and Noland's, by 1960 was fully abreast of the geometrically derived abstraction which was its contemporary—though much more locked in, compositionally, through the necessity to emphasize the dynamics of color. A certain algid brilliance, at once refined and rigid, was the result. It remained for Jules Olitzki, finally, to consummate the incestuous marriage between color-field painting and the aberrant branch of abstraction by employing one or two color dots or lopsided globules against a chromatic field. If his work is any indication, however, the union only incidentally escapes being detrimental to both forms. The attempt to reformulate pictorial quality strictly in terms of color has a tinge of high ambition to it, deliberately compromised here by gratuitous eccentricity. Prismatic authority and great chromatic vibration are somehow embedded in a construct that is mechanistic, without being rationalistic. Without denying the special flavor of such a blend, I find it at the moment unconvincing as a visual experience and too obtrusively esoteric as a concept.

All in all, present abstraction has worked a very definite change on spectator responses in the last six years. With all the cards on the table, the varieties of this new work nevertheless resist any kind of emotional assimilation, even as they offer a practically instantaneous visual experience. Total optical apprehension and knowledge of the instrumenting process occur at about the same quick rate. As Hilton Kramer put it, "The rhetoric of this painting" is to be found

> in those optical inflections which do not invite the spectator's attention so much as stun it. The duration of one's esthetic experience with painting of this school is not of an exploratory nature; one does not probe these paintings, one recovers from their optical audacity and literal brilliance.

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> They resemble musical compositions that consist of one piercing note followed by a silence in which the ear recovers its normal balance while still filled with the echo, memory and shock of the aural assault.

The questions simply remain: "What motivates the assault?" Or, "Why this moratorium on nuance?" Rejecting virtuosity while maintaining competence, this percussive painting exerts a kind of bright revenge on the critical schools of formal analysis and rhapsodic evocation. More and more in recent abstraction, it is becoming impossible to ignore the disconcerting and rather odious presence of Dadaism.

It is therefore extremely interesting to note that the coexistence of the "new abstraction" (as it was fatuously called at the Jewish Museum), and Pop art, has not been without mutual benefit, nor has it been coincidental. The connections between the two are apparent enough to suppose a fluid interchange of sensibility. Thus, abstraction has a specific pungency about it, and Pop art, in its compositional predilections, exhibits much of the intractable waywardness of abstraction. The two are actually combined with wonderful temerity by Nicholas Krushenick. Robert Indiana, James Rosenquist, and Roy Lichtenstein, who form the hard core of Pop art, have an obvious affinity with the flat brilliance of a Kelly or a Held. In one sense, it is not too far fetched to consider the former as abstract artists into whose work a gaggle of allusions and quotations have wandered.

About two years ago, such a statement would have done considerable violence to one's responses precisely because of its reasonableness. The immediate impact of Pop art was to overwhelm the spectator with the presence of "subjects" so monumentually banal, that it was impossible to escape into detached viewing of abstractly composed pictures. But this blatancy itself was a position which still, theoretically, could hold a personal choice in solution. As Leo Steinberg remarked of Lichtenstein, his iconography "was sufficiently ugly so that no one would steal it." And yet the evidence is that Lichtenstein was drawn to the comics because he felt them neither ugly nor beautiful, but merely the repository of forms and sensations which interested him. The spectrum of the artist's opinion on this subject varies, of course. Andy Warhol's is the most extreme, claiming not only great beauty in commercial culture, but eschewing any necessity to gain distance from it whatsoever. His series-repetitions of Campbell soup cans or Marilyn Monroe, however, function in their browbeating monotony in ways not dissimilar to Stella's stripes—that is to say, as

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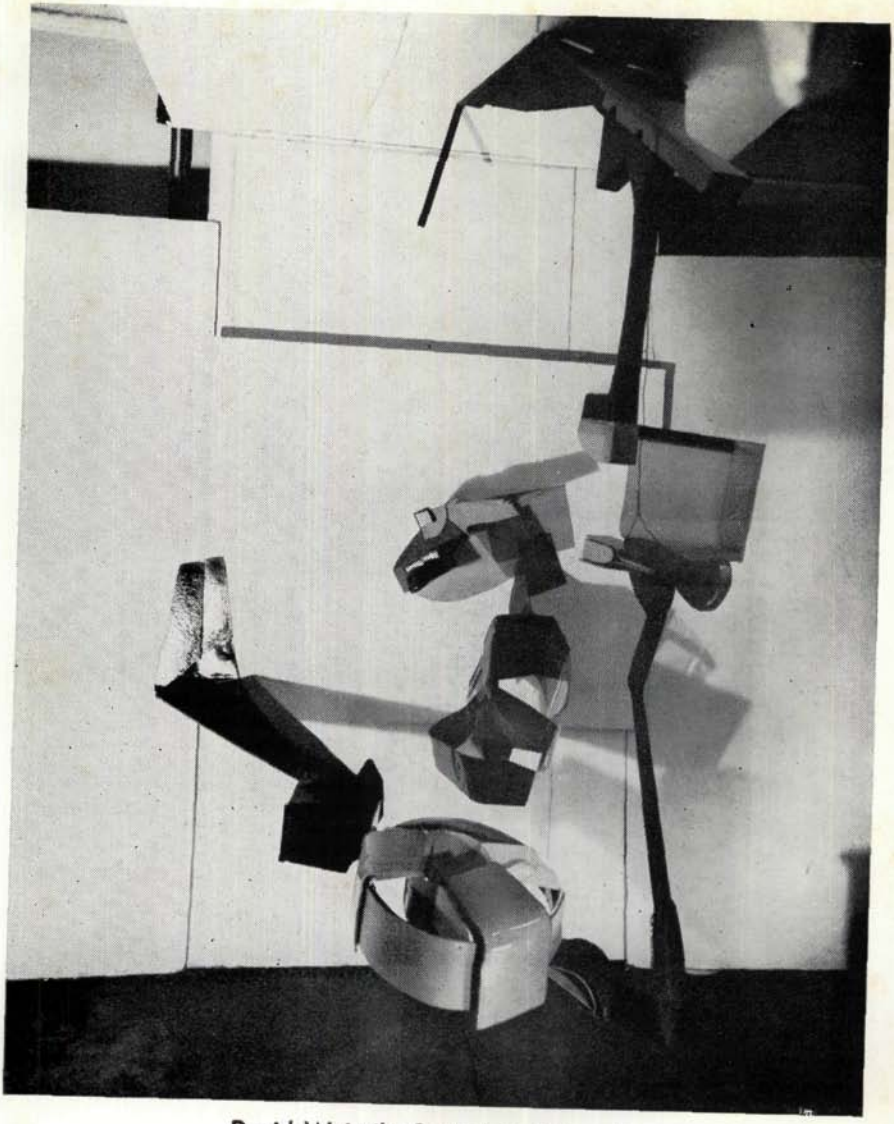

David Weinrib: Spatial Sculpture II.
Howard Wise Gallery.

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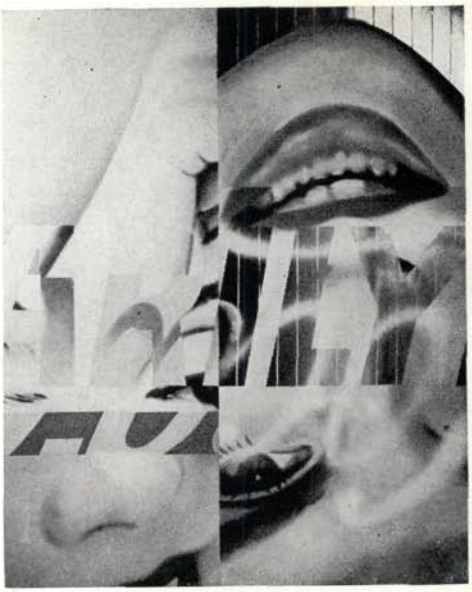
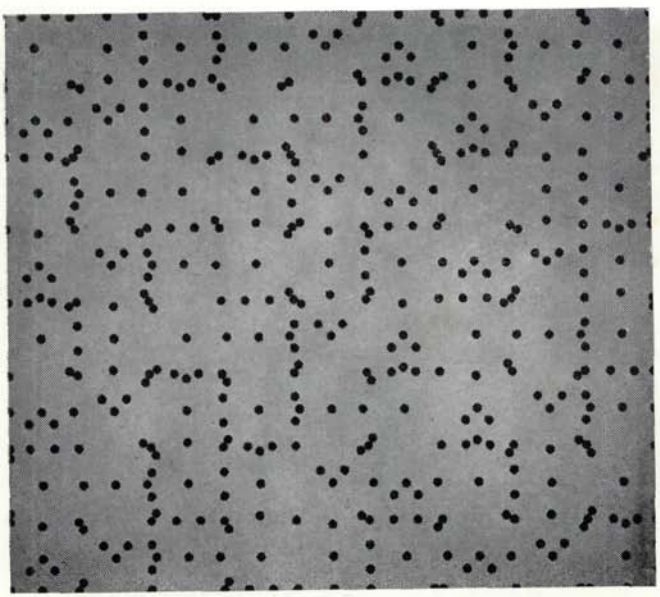
James Rosenquist:
Marilyn Monroe #1.

Private collection of
Mr. Sidney Janis.





L. Poons: Zorn's Lemma.
Collection of Professor William Rubin.

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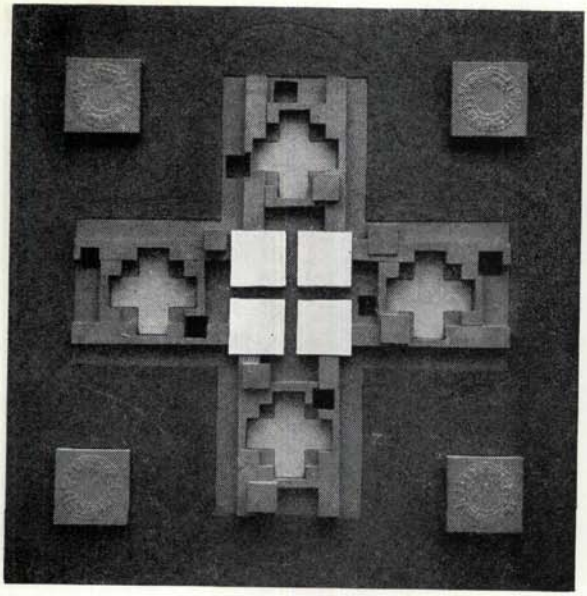

George Ortman:
Peace II.
Howard Wise
Gallery.

Jim Dine: Two Palettes in Black With Pipe.
Courtesy Sidney Janis Gallery.

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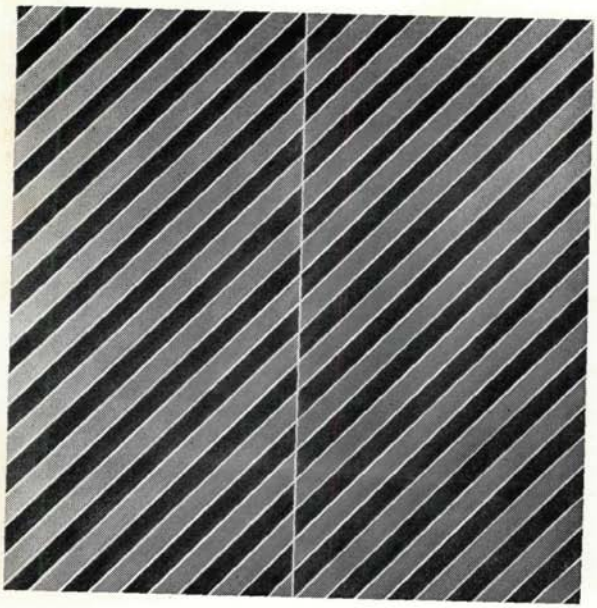

Frank Stella:
Tetuan (3).

Ferus Gallery.

Jasper Johns:
The Figure 5.

Collection
Jasper Johns.

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the most literal repeated affirmations of unappropriated materials. Because the motifs remain relatively untampered with and their inclusion mystifying, the results evince a curious abstractness of feeling. For the grating together of the two circumstances does not produce, finally, any associative or even explicitly Dadaistic presence. In doing nothing whatsoever to disguise his procedure, Warhol underlines one of the peculiarly self-defeating values of Pop art—its absurdity. Underneath the great hoax of his reputation, he remains the unabashed commercial artist.

It may have been in an effort, then, to escape this debilitating still-point, that artists like Oldenburg, and more recently Rosenquist and Wesselman, have launched themselves into assemblage, and even further, into a quasi-environmental form of expression. Leaving aside for the moment the lineage of this whole tendency, one can nevertheless see here a striving for meaning that utilizes real objects and actual space as rhetorical agents. Oldenburg's soft vinyl telephone or french fries are cases in point, as well as quite comic transformations of material. And Rosenquist's billboard images, to which have been added various domestic appointments (with uneven success, I might add) are other, more hybrid attempts at the same kind of breakthrough. Both examples nevertheless simultaneously depend on classic Surrealist devices (such as Magritte's naturalistic form and chiaroscuro but arbitrary coloration or his representation of representations), and insights from the current abstraction such as its economy of means, or its still-life character. In the work of Jim Dine, there are outright allusions to Abstract-Expressionism (drips, impasto, etc.) in addition to the two other currents, so that the range of processes and the alterations of vision in Pop art seem almost endless.

Because of this accent on process, it is becoming increasingly difficult to speak of Pop art as popular. For one thing, some of its "subjects," such as Lichtenstein's transcriptions of Cezanne or Picasso, have nothing to do with kitsch culture. Then, too, there has been a recent drift away from commercially charged motifs to neutral, if everyday, impedimenta, which make various esthetic discontinuities more visible (Oldenburg's telephone, Robert Watts's bread). Johns, Dine and Rauschenberg work so emphatically within this mode that they were even excluded from the "New Realists" exhibition at the Janis Gallery in 1962. But it is questionable now whether this word "realism," semantically so dubious, even applies to the painting under discussion. What unites works in other respects extremely far ranging in their choice of directions, is a kind of agreement to generalize the

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motif to provide an extra-schematic dimension to already highly schematized points of departure.

No matter which artist is considered—Indiana, Wesselman, Lichtenstein—one notes a certain flattening of planes, a coarsening of contour, and an absence of focus (though not necessarily of sharpening) which cannot possibly deceive a spectator into thinking he is seeing a facsimile of the actual object. Readily apparent changes of scale and medium complement this lack of deception. (That photographs of these works are so libelous is the best argument for them as unique objects.)

The play of allusions here becomes rather ironic. If there is a streak of heightened or caricatured, and hence fraudulent, naturalism in his original source, the artist intensifies it, not to speak of subdividing and transplanting it. His response to the conventions of the commercial artist, designer or illustrator, is to make them still more conventionalized. In the added falseness of tone he rehabilitates a sometimes enormously unpromising area for esthetic goals. The very primitivism wreaked upon the initial themes treats them as the outright fiction which their authors are only too anxious to fob off as a glamorous reality. Traditionally enough, the artists oppose whatever truth of the outer world (in this case certain elaborate lies) to the superior truth of their own work. However varied their achievement, and it varies considerably, the validity of their premise is perfectly clear.

So closely as to be at times indistinguishable, assemblage parallels the explorations of "Pop" art. Its ancestry, however, is different, and its ramifications are even more far reaching. Assemblage is the catch-all phrase for such things as collage with delusions of grandeur, sculpture which announces its origins in artifact, and object-sullied paintings. Added to this, one finds a gradually more self-conscious development that began with agglomerates of objects, spread into environments composed of them, and then turned into quasi-theatrical presentations called "happenings"—the creators of which unhesitatingly revert to one form or the other. Thus the poetics of the movement are now, as at their inception, continually open to reformulation.

Perhaps its most systematic theorist has been Alan Kaprow, who spoke in 1960 of happenings as "acts of acceptance of the phenomena of the outer world"—where "the field is created as one goes along . . . (and) are simply another degree of extension within a mode whose very principle . . . is precisely extension." Red Grooms, Jim Dine, Kaprow, and Oldenburg have been practitioners of happenings, but it is perhaps the last who best characterized not so much the principle as the content of the medium when he said:

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> I am for an art that a kid licks, after peeling away the wrapper. I am for an art that is smoked, like a cigarette, smells like a pair of shoes. I am for an art that flaps like a flag, or helps blow noses. . . . I am for art that unfolds like a map, that you can squeeze, like your sweety's arm, or kiss, like a pet dog. . . .

In one sense, this whole phase of sensory exploration is an outgrowth of Abstract-Expressionism, especially its cult of immediacy and improvisation, but in happenings pushed out into the realm of the social, the animal and the ephemeral. It is like the Wagnerian dream of synthesis of the arts upon which has been superimposed junk culture. There have been Futurist and Dada antecedents for this too, but none with such a curious dualism of optimism and anarchy, a dualism which seems to embrace real life most literally, but so restlessly as only to backfire into inadvertent ridicule of the motifs, and the productions in which they figure.

After gaining notice in the two "New Forms-New Media" shows at the Martha Jackson Gallery in 1960, assemblage achieved international renown in the exhibition of that name at the Museum of Modern Art in 1962. As Pollock is to Abstract-Expressionism, the progenitor of the whole mode of assemblage, whether in its static or mobile forms, is Robert Rauschenberg. In fact, the suggestion of motion, of mind as well as of things, is actuated by his "combine paintings," in which the spectator's participation in the activity of the picture is solicited not by emotive brush strokes, but rather more bluntly by a chair or a ladder. Fans that "blow" gusts of paint and radios that blare from behind the canvas are examples of extra-pictorial activation that surprise as much by their literalness as they baffle by their final recession before the claims of paint. As for paint itself, it is difficult not to be aware that it has been demoted from the quite exalted status it once had in, say, de Kooning, Rauschenberg's mentor. The highly sensuous impact of Rauschenberg contrasts with the meanness of his materials so that one becomes conscious of a kind of bright nihilism in this painter, a continual reconstitution and loss of energy in a matrix whose most salient note is an elegance of concept which holds all its disparate materials in balance. Any emotional coloration, any evaluation of subject, is withheld—which is precisely Rauschenberg's special accent.

Several elements in this remarkable artist are worth attention. One is his totally open-ended view of chance. In "Factum," 1957, for instance, he duplicates his own paint bespattered composition, thus de-

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monstrating that chance lacks individuality, and that the freely-wrought is not necessarily spontaneous. It is the quintessential criticism of Abstract-Expressionism. On the other hand, as his friend John Cage once related when Rauschenberg's paintings were being transported, any damage "wouldn't concern him at all—it would be part of the painting's natural life." (As contrasted with Johns, for whom damage "would reopen the esthetic problem.") Another consideration is Rauschenberg's multiple montage-like inclusion of objects which do not commit him to a specific view of the American urban environment, yet physically allow him to document it with a breathtaking range and justness. Just the same, his themes are often merely disquisitions on vicarious communication, expressed quite characteristically in his rubbings and transferred silk-screens of photographs, where one is always at some and possibly several points of remove from the actual events or objects. And even when one has the latter in hand, their very tangibility is questioned by their inclusion in a predominantly pictorial field. It was from Rauschenberg's example that Jim Dine (as Oyvind Fahlstrom said) could imagine the juxtaposition of an electric light and painted, caricatured light beams—which forces one to ask (but prevents one from answering) the question: "Which is more 'real,' the immaterial light from the lamp, or the thingness of the paint?"

This questioning of the existential status of things is at the root of the marvelously fruitful esthetics of assemblage. Taken out of the context of painting itself, the valence of assemblage diminishes. But enough remains to inform the sibling work of people as diverse as H.C. Westerman, Robert Morris, Bruce Conner, and Edward Keinholz, to name only a few. Their great failing is to allow acceptance of the created presence to become an absolute in itself. For the more shock value becomes the artistic aim, the less the work stands independently as form, and the less applicable it is to experience. In the best pieces of the artists mentioned, the rampant literary associations—and they might jump from nineteenth-century Americana to Skid Row dereliction—work hand in hand with the basically indefinable and mysterious effect of assemblage as a mode of existence. Once again one is put into great doubt as to the identity of the object. Unabashedly concrete, the created image still yields its qualities reluctantly to the mind. This is especially obvious when the assemblage takes on some of the particularities of sculpture. In fact, the nature of sculpture is interrogated by assemblage. For all that they are shaped uniquely by the individual hand, three-dimensional sculptures are coming to appear like artifacts, just as artifacts, eventually pushed back into the

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natural world, are salvaged to be reincarnated in a new life. Far from being solely a matter of categories or semantics, these shifts are of the essence of much non-pictorial activity today. On one hand the proposition is stated that nothing is esthetic merely, and on the other, the counter proposition that the useful or the ruined can always be made esthetic.

After discovering this basic principle for himself, a spectator realizes that it is only a question of accent or emphasis which decides whether his experience is essentially that of assemblage or sculpture. The career of the brilliant Richard Stankiewicz illustrates an oscillating sensibility within this whole region. Composed of rusted boilers, abandoned plumbing parts, pipes and metallic fittings of every kind, his work first had an assemblage character, by turns wryly witty or primitivistic. But of recent years, his vision has become more abstract and spatially convincing even though the materials he uses have remained basically the same. Much of this can also be said for the metal armatured canvas constructions of Leo Bontecou. Similarly, with John Chamberlain and David Weinrib, both of whom employ either tatters of mangled automobiles or snipped enameled metal plates and plastic, three dimensional accomplishment is memorable. Weinrib, the oldest of a group of sculptors which includes Tom Doyle and Mark di Suvero, has notably explored the possibilities of an environmental configuration. One can become physically entangled in their work. And in addition, they exemplify (along with George Sugarman and the young San Franciscan, Robert Hudson) an overall tendency toward polychrome sculpture, the most remarkable since the end of the last century. It is therefore not at all surprising that these sculptors have direct affinities with painting, Chamberlain with de Kooning, Sugarman with Stuart Davis, Hudson with Frank Lobdell, Weinrib and his friends variously with Franz Kline and Al Held. In general, conventions which painting had long ago exhausted have been engaging the attention of serious sculptors in their infinitely more resistant medium. In turn too, the initial obstrusiveness of unusual materials fades as spatial dynamics make themselves felt.

Whatever it is that may typify American art of the last seven years, it is neither a single stylistic idiom nor an ideological consonance, but at the most an outlook that expresses itself by obliqueness and indirection, almost canceling what it apparently sets out to do. In such work initial appearances are invariably never to be trusted. Largely this is what modifies their treatment of ugliness, otherwise a problema-

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tic preoccupation in many camps. To be concerned with what are literally the most tawdry and repellent appearances in American civilization is not an activity that would have succeeded, I think, without a correspondingly intellectual interest in redefining the nature of the work and our perception in its own terms. This endeavor, finally, for all that its origins might be traced back into Abstract-Expressionism, continues and make both spectator and artist uncomfortable, and by implication keeps the avant-garde spirit alive.

In recent art, intellectual current has been switched from physical performance and emotional continuity—the failure of which produces a most immediate kind of anxiety—to doubt about the distinctions between media and styles, artifact and art, which in turn discharges a less intense, but far more pervasive anxiety. The whole of the European and American twentieth-century past is being recapitulated for nourishment, to be churned up by the kind of inner challenge of this program. If the Dada and Surrealist elements of our tradition were the first to be reappraised, the Constructivists and Bauhaus were the next to fall under a scrutiny of American artists, whose sense of the contemporary makes them fundamentally disrespectful, and whose local experience becomes more and more vicarious and irrational.

To put it more positively, the discoveries of contemporary art have to do with the nature of the contained emotional complexes in a pictorial or three-dimensional work. It has been by no means proved that an agitated brush mark connotes emotion, or that a flat, uniformly applied paint surface signifies detachment. These are only the crudest psychological notations, or rather prejudices, about the content of a work of art. Most important, the insight is already upon us that our intuitions of spontaneity or calculation may have nothing to do with the emotional state evoked within us—for neither takes into account the artist's own separation of conception and execution, consequences of which are becoming ever more apparent in the galleries. Time and again, he disproves the mistaken idea that intention equals result which was at the core of many theories about Abstract-Expressionism. Cued by a wealth of infinitely subtle contexts, an "hysterical" square is altogether possible. What one sees at the present time are manipulations of such contexts—mutations of anaesthetized passion. Behind such masks, the ambivalences of contemporary civilization are finding perturbing expression.

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R. H. S. Crossman

RADICALS ON THE RIGHT

The predictable—and yet unexpected—result of the Republican Convention was one of those shocks which does not wear off with time. Unlike the death of Kennedy which—here in Britain, at least—seemed to recede into history with almost improper precipitancy, the impact of Barry Goldwater's candidacy deepens week by week. If one tried hard, one could explain Senator McCarthy away as an ebullient adventurer, and picture him as the dirty froth of American democracy in full spate. As for McCarthyism, it was just possible to dismiss it as a freak epidemic, and to point to the speed with which American democracy returned to health as a sign of vitality.

Reflecting on the consequences of Mr. Goldwater, however, only the most superficial friend of the United States can deceive himself with such clinical metaphors. Indeed, the most terrifying aspects of the Goldwater candidacy are the healthiness and normality of this self-appointed prophet of American extremism—the well-balanced personality, the extrovert ethics, the hearty and wholesome family life. Here is no rabid rabble-rouser, one says to oneself, seeing Barry Goldwater on television—no eccentric demagogue running a freak campaign, but a respectable and respected American citizen: not the American fascist, in fact, but the quiet American, spokesman of worries and frustrations derided by the intellectual establishment, but voiced for years in tens of thousands of offices and clubs.

Right up to San Francisco I resolutely refused, along with most of my countrymen, to take Barry Goldwater seriously. Even the pusillanimity of Mr. Eisenhower and the priggish incompetence of Mr. Scranton did not open my eyes before the Convention started. Indeed, I only realized how unperceptive I had been when I read for the

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second time George Kennan's little book *On Dealing with the Communist World*.[1]

When this slender volume first came into my hands three months ago, I gulped it down at one reading late at night, and then dropped it on the floor beside my bed with what I now ashamedly remember to have been a sense of superior impatience. "Poor old Kennan," I said to myself. "Without doubt he is one of the noblest characters I have been privileged to meet. But what this dedicated public servant has always lacked is the politician's sense of proportion. Of course as we get old we all run along our mental ruts and begin to caricature our brilliant juvenile improvisations. But even if they were delivered to undergraduates, these three essays on coexistence are really too obvious in their analysis, and too timid and defeatist in their conclusions. If we are to take Mr. Kennan seriously, we should be driven to the conclusion that the impetus of the Kennedy peace initiative has already been dissipated, and that the chances of a positive American contribution to the solution of the problems of coexistence are very slender indeed. Of course there are some reactionary crackpots about. But why on earth should a man of George Kennan's calibre devote a book to demolishing the arguments of the John Birch Society, and treat it as an opponent that must be taken seriously?"

Let me confess it freely. This is what I would have written if I had sat down and reviewed *On Dealing with the Communist World* on the morning after I first read it. Three months later, I realize that already, while we over here were still treating Goldwater as a figure of fun, Mr. Kennan appreciated the forces that were operating below the surface of American public opinion. In his first lecture, he warned his Princeton listeners against the "resurgence during the last ten years of a body of opinion which rejects the whole concept of peaceful coexistence and which sees no issue to the present contest except in the final and complete destruction of one side or the other," and went on to describe his profound depression when, on returning from his term at the Embassy in Belgrade, he found all the post-World War I illusions of the Bolshevik peril once again current. "Do we have to start once more with all the arguments and counter-arguments of 1918," he asked himself, "as though we had just woken up from some sort of amnesia?"

And to this question he found there was only one positive reply. "We have to do here with a great and important body of opinion in

1. George Kennan, *On Dealing With The Communist World*. Harper & Row. $3.00.

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this country—and a growing one I fear—which is fully prepared to reject in its entirety the experience and judgement of all of us who have had to deal responsibly with the problem of Communist power over these last thirty years." And he concludes, "so strong is now their prevalence in Congress and certain other segments of government in Washington that it is not an exaggeration to say that we have today two wholly different and mutually contradictory foreign policies being pursued simultaneously in that city, and you can find whichever of them you want, depending on which door you want to put your head in."

Goldwater's candidacy has taught me that what I dismissed as Mr. Kennan's timidity was really caution. All the constructive parts of his lectures are dominated by the consideration that proposals for improving American-Russian relations must be considered in this new and increasingly hostile climate of public opinion. On East-West trade, for example, he tells us bluntly that no sane or consistent American attitude is possible. And he takes the example of the wheat deal to show how little business interests weigh in the balance against Congressional prejudice. "The Russians of course have a great shortage of it," he writes,

> and the United States a great surplus. Both shortage and surplus are the effect of irrational agricultural policies pursued by the two governments for ideological reasons. . . . In these circumstances, the basis for a deal, or a series of deals, would seem on the face of it to be very much present. The United States, by selling its wheat, would make it possible for the Russians to go on giving their farmers inadequate incentive for the production of grain; they, by purchasing it, would make it possible for the United States to go on giving its own farmers too much. . . . American statesmen of earlier decades would have been amazed to learn that there could be any hesitation about so obviously advantageous a proposition.

But in 1964, trade with the Soviet Union and even with such anti-Soviet Communists as the Yugoslavs has become "a focal point for political and emotional hesitations." The best that Mr. Kennan can hope is that Congress will be persuaded not to sabotage the efforts to expand East-West trade of those European countries, including Britain, whose economic policies are conducted in terms not of ideology but of business interests.

In his proposals for disarmament and disengagement, Mr. Kennan is still more cautious because he realizes that here American anti-

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Communist prejudices are reinforced from West Germany. The disintegration of the eastern block, he points out, and the growth of polycentrism are providing the West with unrivaled opportunities for new diplomatic initiative, designed not merely to relax tension with the Soviet Union, but to increase the freedom of the East European satellites. Yet he sadly admits that as a result of American and German immobilism, the West's room for maneuver has become extremely small: indeed, there is no practical chance that any of these great opportunities will be seized unless the United States succeeds in resolving the conflict in Washington between the coexistence policy of the White House, and the Congressional anti-Communist crusade. "If what we require," he concludes,

> is a new national debate, and something like a public showdown to clarify these questions and permit this country to speak with a clear and unequivocal voice in world affairs, then let us not postpone this debate any longer. This is a question of fundamentals. Whichever way you cut it, someone—and by that I mean one of the two great bodies of thought in our country—is terribly, tragically, and intolerably wrong. If we are to move ahead effectively, the country will have to make up its mind which it is.

Since he spoke these words at Princeton last winter, the public showdown has begun. In the course of defeating Goldwater, there is a chance for the American people to make up its mind. Of course every effort will be made by those who control both political machines, to avoid such a clear-cut intellectual conflict. Already the movement toward the middle of the road, which is a regular feature of the modern democratic election campaign, has got under way. Mr. Johnson is making sure that no one can call him "soft on communism," and Mr. Goldwater remains discreetly quiet while the moderate Republicans assure us he does not mean what he used to say. Nevertheless, we must hope that the social forces and political attitudes represented by his candidacy will be articulated, and that his defeat will justify the democratic process by clarifying issues instead of obscuring them.

From this point of view, *Suicide of the West*[2] comes as a godsend. Even before he became the Republican candidate, Mr. Goldwater was not the kind of politician who expressed himself in terms of coherent doctrine. It is highly convenient, therefore, that James Burnham should

2. James Burnham, *Suicide of the West*. John Day. $5.95.

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have appointed himself his ideologue. Described in its subtitle as "An Essay on the Meaning and Destiny of Liberalism," his latest book expounds with corrosive clarity the right-wing case against that astonishing liberal turn-about which Mr. Eisenhower executed in the last week of his first term. By leaving the Hungarian revolt to perish unaided while helping Nasser to defeat Britain he destroyed the last remnants of Acheson's Containment, and Dulles' Liberation policies. During the decade that followed—in which Eisenhower and two successive Presidents have very cautiously developed a policy of coexistence abroad and racial equality at home—reaction has been boiling up below the surface. The traditional suspicion of intellectuals, the suppressed racism, the renewed fears of a left-wing "conspiracy" at home and abroad, the taxpayer's resentment of welfare economics and foreign aid, the craving for big-stick policies to teach the foreigner a lesson—all these confused and ill-expressed prejudices of an affluent society have been exploited by Mr. Goldwater, and articulated by Mr. Burnham into a coherent statement of right-wing radicalism.

When I first read *The Managerial Revolution,* I welcomed it as the first piece of American political vulgarization comparable with the work of John Strachey. As Communists, both men undertook the superhuman task of not merely translating Marx into English but of rethinking Marxism in Anglo-Saxon terms. When they broke with their Communist masters, they turned their peculiar powers of polemical analysis and political dialectic against the totalitarian enemy, and demonstrated that an anti-Communist ideology can be vulgarized in just the same way as a Communist ideology.

As long as Stalin kept the world hopelessly divided into two blocks, forcing us into the postures of cold war and the policies of containment, anti-Communist ideology enjoyed an immense vogue not only on the Right but among liberals and socialists as well. But since Mr. Eisenhower's turn-about, the thaw induced by the combination of Khrushchev's revisionism, the nuclear deadlock and the Sino-Russian dispute has been changing the climate of opinion in Washington and London. Over here, the conservative political leaders, who are never unduly worried by charges of intellectual inconsistency, have completely put aside the postures of the anti-Communist crusade, and proceeded in Africa to accept decolonization at the cost of breaking their pledged word to the white settlers. In its attitude to Communism and colonialism, the whole British political establishment has transplanted itself to a position well left of center, and adopted policies which they themselves would have condemned as fellow-traveling ap-

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peasement only a few years ago. Across the Atlantic, things do not seem to us to be moving quite so fast. But the crab-like slide to the left begun by Mr. Eisenhower was certainly carried forward at a somewhat increased pace by Mr. Kennedy and then continued by Mr. Johnson. With the Test Ban Treaty signed, and Africa liberated, "we are all liberals now."

All, that is, except Mr. Goldwater, his ideologue Mr. Burnham, and a segment of unknown dimensions sliced out of the American electorate which is still frozen in the postures of cold war, and darkly suspicious that the press, the intellectuals and the liberal politicians are once again betraying them. It is this fury and suspicion which gives bite to Mr. Burnham's polemic. The opinion-makers are anxious to forget their anti-Communist past: he is there to recall it. In the thaw, he comes like an iceman to remind them that winter may not, after all, be far behind.

Suicide of the West is a powerful enough document to confirm Mr. Kennan's worst fears. Liberalism, as Mr. Burnham is careful to emphasize, should not be regarded as the *cause* of the contraction of the frontiers of Western civilization, which he notes as the most striking characteristic of post-war history. But what liberal ideology *has* provided, he argues, is a body of ideas which by justifying this decline has actually accelerated its pace. And here he notes the contrast between Communist and liberal ideology. Whereas Communism is the overt opponent of the West, liberalism is the enemy within the gates, corroding the free people's will to resist totalitarian attack, and persuading them to regard the destruction of their own civilization as a victory for human progress.

Far the best chapters in *Suicide of the West* are those in which Mr. Burnham makes explicit the half-truths, sophisms and illusions implicit in a great deal of sloppy liberal thinking. As a test of the degree to which our thinking is permeated with this kind of "do-good" liberalism, he lists thirty-nine questions for each of us to answer; and later, in an even more effective chapter, sets out nineteen "self-evident" liberal truths and challenges their validity with nineteen challenging counter-assertions. This is a virtuoso performance, though I must leave it to the reader to decide whether the technique should be described as socratic or sophistic.

Mr. Burnham has an easy task in demonstrating that there is a great deal more historical evidence for the Christian doctrine of original sin, than for the secular liberal assumptions about Progress which—at least until the rise of Hitler—induced progressive people to believe we

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would all live in peace and amity once the human race had been liberated from the three scourges of tyranny, poverty and ignorance. The philosophical illusion, he tells us, which unites liberal Welfare Economics with Socialist Planning and Communist Dictatorship is the "plastic view of human nature"—the concept of the human personality as a wax tablet molded by education and environment. From this basic assumption, liberals then falsely conclude that citizens will vote rationally once they are liberated from ignorance and poverty, just as nations will be less likely to make war if the great powers are persuaded to disarm, colonial peoples are given their freedom, and racial inequalities abolished.

As a generalized ideal, Mr. Burnham concedes that the liberal vision of a free man living in a free society is acceptable enough, though even here he rejects the kind of "provocative egalitarianism" which denies the superiority of Western man over "lesser breeds within the law." He is also willing to admit that as a nonconformist opposition within a hierarchical society, liberalism may provide a useful stimulant. But he believes that, consumed as a main beverage, it always becomes a deadly poison.

Having dealt with liberal theory, he next turns to the practice of liberalism, and attacks the role of the liberal statesman in politics—Roosevelt at Yalta, for instance, or Mr. Kennedy faced with the Cuban crisis. In his view, the liberal is always "morally disarmed" (and therefore at a grave disadvantage in handling Communists) by two tenets: (1) that every problem must have its solution; and (2) that change is usually for the good. These tenets render him unable either to defend the status quo with a good conscience, or to apply force in good time. Surrounded—as Western man always will be—by injustice, poverty and cruelty, the liberal is hamstrung by his sense of universal guilt; and his spirit hovers uneasily between the extremes of self-deceiving appeasement and desperate recourse to force. Convinced that nationalism is reactionary, he permits his patriotism to be replaced by a synthetic internationalism which inclines him to decide any issue against his own country, and to give his enemies the benefit of the doubt.

The main defect of the liberal in politics, therefore, is his "moral asymmetry." Unable to judge objectively, he applies a double standard, acquitting under-privileged nations of the self-same crimes for which he condemns his own affluent society, and blinding himself to the faults in Communism which he is the first to condemn when he finds them at home. In Burnham's view, it is this "moral asymmetry" which has made the liberal a bad security risk in the Cold War. "He cannot strike

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with consistent firmness against Communism, because he dimly feels that in so doing he will somehow be wounding himself." The liberal conscience, in fact, is wide open to Communist blackmail. "He is always looking for the enemy on the Right, whereas in reality all the major challenges which now bear crucially on our survival come from the Left."

The conclusion to which *Suicide of the West* leads us is not unexpected. The United States—and with it the whole Western Alliance—is threatened by a world-wide conspiracy which unites the liberal American professor on his campus, the Labour politician in Westminster, and the Communist in the Kremlin. It is this secret alliance of the overt enemy outside and the "enemy within the gate" which enabled Stalin to be the effective victor of World War II, and which since 1956 has subjected the West to a disastrous series of defeats. Final Communist victory can only be averted by the revival of a Radical Right determined to liquidate liberalism at home, and talk to Communism abroad in the only language it understands.

Mr. Burnham tells us practically nothing about the policies which this Radical Right would pursue if it ever achieved power. By logical deduction, however, we can conclude that on the home front it would restore traditional disciplines in education, crush crime by a return to harsh retributive punishments; substitute nineteenth-century laissez faire for Keynesian economics, and put an end to the "provocative egalitarianism" of civil rights legislation. About foreign policy there are only the vaguest hints. We learn that it would be necessary to reintroduce the "tragic dimension" into our picture of the good life. "Except for mercenaries, saints and neurotics, no one is willing to sacrifice and die for progressive education, medicare, humanity in the abstract, the United Nations and a ten percent rise in Social Security payments."

When I read these sentences, my mind jerked back to my job as Director of Psychological Warfare in World War II. Automatically, I translated Mr. Burnham's words into German and—hey presto—here was an abstract of two central doctrines from *Mein Kampf*. Adolf Hitler too saw his country "poisoned" by liberal ideology, and enrolled thousands of business men and white-collar workers in the S.A. by persuading them to join the Right against a secret conspiracy between the liberal politicians of the Weimar Establishment and the Communists in the Kremlin. In his classical chapter on the technique of propaganda, he explains that in democratic politics the defeat of the adversary is achieved not by an appeal to reason or by putting

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forward a rational program, but by creating a convincing picture of a single odious enemy, and lumping a number of quite different opponents together under this stereotype.

This trick worked wonders when it was first used under the Weimar Republic. While the academics were assured that Hitler was really a moderate, and beguiled by his racy exposure of democratic hypocrisy, the business community and the non-political masses were being mobilized against the liberal enemy. And meanwhile the idealism of youth was attracted by denunciations of materialism and mystical appeals to self-sacrifice.

When he writes, "The choice of the enemy is the decisive action in determining the nature of political struggle," Mr. Burnham—unwittingly perhaps—is borrowing this Hitlerian technique. He too paints a savage picture of liberalism in secret league with Communism, and then by an extraordinary sleight of hand reaches the conclusion that this conspiracy has managed to get control of all the levers of power in Washington, all the media of mass communication, and the whole educational system. Under this single stereotype of the do-gooding fellow-traveling pacifist dupe of Khrushchev, Mr. Burnham lumps together F.D.R. and John Kennedy, Hubert Humphrey and Averell Harriman, not to mention the whole staff of the *New York Times*. And if anybody objects that this kind of higher lunacy could have no appeal to an educated electorate, I can only recall that the Nazi denunciation of Weimar Liberalism was swallowed hook, line and sinker, by the great majority of educated Germans—business men, university professors, bishops and all.

Having noticed the ominous resemblances between the German anti-liberal crusade of the twenties, and the American anti-liberal crusade of the sixties, one must give full weight to the differences as well. What distinguished Hitler as a demagogue was the unique openness with which he publicized his determination to smash the Weimar democracy, and create a *Reich* in which the German *Herrenvolk* would rebuild European civilization by making the Slavs and the colored peoples their hewers of wood and drawers of water. The Germans were not raped by Hitler. They fell in love with his overt racism and open violence: and the propaganda of his speeches was reinforced by the physical violence of the S.A. and the S.S.

Mr. Burnham's belief in the superiority of Western man is closely linked with the Nazi concept of *Herrenvolk*. But there is no trace either in his writings or in the behavior of the Republican candidate whom he serves of the Nazi cult of violence. That is why it is absurd to call

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him a fascist or a Nazi. In the truest sense of the word, these American anti-liberals seem to me to be reactionaries, inspired not by a determination to capture power but by a nostalgic desire to return to the era of old laissez faire and White supremacy.

As such they are dangerous enough. Even modest success in mobilizing votes this autumn will enable them to put on a brake sufficient to render the racial problem insoluble, just as they are already strong enough to prevent the Administration from grasping the opportunities for coexistence with the Soviet Union. They will never become the conquerors of democracy, like the Nazis: but they could certainly be its wreckers.

There is one more comment I would like to make on this disconcertingly readable book. In politics as in war, it is a fatal mistake to underestimate the enemy. Of course, one can show that Mr. Burnham's anti-liberal ideology can be ridiculed and demolished just as easily as the liberal ideology at whose expense he has such fun. Mr. Burnham himself remarks on the way an ideology blinds its adherents to the facts, undermines their power of objective judgement, and in the last resort cuts them off from reality altogether. But what could be more utterly remote from real life than the picture he himself paints of an Administration penetrated by fellow-travelers? How can a sane man condemn Mr. Kennedy for softness to Cuba and give a history of East-West relations since 1956 without a single mention of the Sino-Russian conflict—or, indeed, of any changes within the Communist bloc?

But to ridicule Mr. Burnham's own ideological blindness is not the end of the matter. Indeed, I am sure that the gravest mistake we can commit is to underrate the importance of his attack on liberal thinking and on liberalism in government. There is a real danger that books like *Suicide of the West* will be disregarded or made fun of by those who most need to take them to heart. Though he himself is guilty of it, Mr. Burnham strikes home when he accuses us of moral asymmetry, and reminds us that it is not only the Left of the thirties which falls under his indictment. With the wisdom of hindsight, we all now condemn the attitude of so many American liberals and British socialists to the Moscow trials, and the double standard by which they condemned those features of Nazi totalitarianism, to which they turned a blind eye when they recurred in the Soviet Union.

In the 1960s, the area of moral asymmetry has changed; but its extent is just as great as ever. The right-wing enemy which we find it so easy to ridicule and condemn has not changed much since thirty years ago. But to the left of center it is no longer at the altar of Russian

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Communism that intellectual honesty is sacrificed. Yet I strongly suspect that in twenty years time, we shall look back with pained repugnance at the hypocrisy with which progressive-minded people in the sixties turned a blind eye to the racism prevalent in black Africa, while condemning South African *apartheid*. Nor will it be easy, when the sixties are seen in the perspective of history, to deny the existence on both sides of the Atlantic of a double standard in our attitude to racial minorities at home. Because I am already written off as a dyed-in-the-wool Zionist, I can perhaps afford to mention the anti-anti-Semitic veto which has successfully suppressed any candid and objective writing about the Jewish problem, and the anti-anti-Negro veto which makes honorable newspaper men suppress irrefutable evidence that Negro rioters can commit crimes of violence, and tempts literary critics grossly to overpraise Negro writers for books which they would have treated very differently if composed by people of their own color.

Liberalism in America and democratic socialism in Britain have for thirty years been providing the dynamic which disproved Marxism, and made a Communist revolution unnecessary. But the Labour Movement over here, since it has become respectable and successful, has evolved its own brand of conformism, obscurantism and color blindness; and it seems to me that liberalism in the United States has developed not dissimilar forms of hypocrisy and Pharisee-ism. It is surely a sign that something is wrong with the Left when a large minority of a democratic community are angry enough to feel that Barry Goldwater expresses their frustrations, and James Burnham articulates their thoughts. I agree with George Kennan that when this happens we should take the warning very seriously indeed.

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(*Continued from Page* 514)

SECOND BARBER

Between the devil and the deep
blue sea, your Honor!

FIRST BARBER

His Honor likes
the sea. Everyone loves a sailor.

MAN WITH PERIWIG

Hurry! I'm in torture! Open!
I have authority, hem, hem!

(MAN WITH PERIWIG *knocks loudly. The* WOMAN *stands in doorway.)*

WOMAN *(Singing)*

Where is my boy in leather pants,
who gives a woman what she wants?

MAN WITH PERIWIG *(Singing in falsetto)*

Woman, I have a royal Crown
your countryman gave the ferryman
a-standing on the strand;
but money goes from hand to hand:
the crown is on the town,
the money's mine, I want to dine.
Whatever we do is our affair,
the breath of freedom's in the air.

FIRST BARBER

The lady's ballast's in the air.

SECOND BARBER

Two ten pound tea chests. The lady needs
a little uplift from the clergy.

MAN WITH PERIWIG

I'm breaking on the foamy breakers!
Help, help!

WOMAN *(Singing)*

I loved a loyal boy, his stick
was bigger than a tea-ship's mast;
alas, love comes, and goes as fast
as soldiers on the double-quick.

MAN WITH PERIWIG *(Singing)*

Lady, I wish my fate were cast
inside a lucky little dory

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with a sailor in the stern,
sailing, sailing over the bounding sea
to the land of hope and glory.
Hem, hem, I have authority,
I wish my lady had a firm,
hard-chested figure like a mast,
but what has love to do with fact?
A lover loves his nemesis;
the patriotic act.

(The MAN WITH THE PERIWIG *gives the* LADY *the crown and passes in. The lights go out.)*

BARBER

Once to every man and nation
comes the time a gentleman
wants to clear his reputation.

TAVERN KEEPER

Once to every man and nation
comes the time a man's a man.

BARBER

His Honor's perished on the blast.

(The BARBERS *saunter off along with the tavern keeper. The* BOY *turns to* ROBIN, *who is lost in thought.)*

BOY

What are they doing, Robin? Why
have they let that chirping man
into the lady's house? He'll wake
our kinsman.

ROBIN

No, I think the Major
has left. By watching I have learned
to read the signs. The Rattlesnake
means Major Molineux is out.
A British flag means he is at home.

BOY

You talk in riddles like the town.

ROBIN

Say what you mean; mean what you say:
that's how we used to talk in Deerfield.
It's not so simple here in Boston.

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(The pillared mansion lights up. ROBIN *and the* BOY *approach it. The Lion and Unicorn of England are gone. Instead, a large Rattlesnake flag is showing.)*

Brother, we've reached our destination.
This is our kinsman's house. I know it
from the steel engraving that
he gave us when he came to Deerfield.
Our journey's over. Here's our mansion.

BOY

Robin, it has a Rattlesnake.

ROBIN

That means the Major's not at home.

BOY

Look at that ugly rattlesnake.
The inscription says, "Don't tread on me!"
That's silly, Robin, who would think
of walking on a rattlesnake?
These city people must be spoonfed;
When the rain rains here, it says, "I'm raining!"

(The MAN WITH THE MASK *comes out of the mansion. Half his face is now fiery red, the other half is still mottled.)*

MAN WITH MASK

I am the man on horseback.

ROBIN

No,
you're walking, Sir.

MAN WITH MASK

I am a king.

ROBIN

The King's in England. You must be sick.
Have you seen your face? Half's red,
the other half is pocked and mottled.

MAN WITH MASK

Oh I'm as healthy as the times.
I am an image of this city.
Do you see this colored handkerchief?

(The MAN WITH MASK *draws out a small British flag.)*

ROBIN

Our British flag, Sir.

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MAN WITH MASK

Yes, it doesn't
help my illness any more,
When I try to cool my burning brow,
or blow my nose on it.

ROBIN

I know
a man who used to own this house.
Let's see if he's still here. Perhaps,
my friend can help to heal your sickness.

MAN WITH MASK

My face will be entirely red soon;
then I'll be well. Who is your friend?

ROBIN

A kinsman, Major Molineux.

MAN WITH MASK

I have a fellow feeling for him.
The Major used to own this house;
now it's mine. I'm taking over.
I've just signed the final deed.
Do you see my nameplate on the gate?

ROBIN

The Rattlesnake?

MAN WITH MASK

The Rattlesnake.

ROBIN

If I pick up the Rattlesnake,
will it help me find my kinsman?
I think he needs my help. We are
his last relations in the world.

MAN WITH MASK

The last shall be the first, my Boy.

ROBIN

What do you mean? You talk like Christ.

MAN WITH MASK

The first shall be the last, my Boy.
The Major has a heavy hand;
we have been beaten to the ground.

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ROBIN

My kinsman has an open hand.

MAN WITH MASK

Ridden like horses, fleeced like sheep,
worked like cattle, clothed and fed
like hounds and hogs!

ROBIN

I want to find him.

MAN WITH MASK

Whipping-posts, gibbets, bastinadoes
and the rack! I must be moving.

ROBIN

Wait, I'll take up the Rattlesnake.
Please, help me find my kinsman.

*(*ROBIN *takes hold of the* MAN WITH THE MASK*'s shoulder. The* MAN *steps back and draws his sword.)*

MAN WITH MASK

Move!
You've torn my cloak. You'd better keep
a civil tongue between your teeth.
I have a mission.

*(*ROBIN *raises his cudgel. He and the* MAN WITH THE MASK *stand a moment facing each other.)*

BOY

Brain him, Robin.
Mangle the bastard's bloody face.
He doesn't like our kinsman, Robin.

ROBIN

I only asked for information.

MAN WITH MASK

For information! Information
is my trade. I was a lawyer
before I learned the pleasures of
the military life. The Major
was my first teacher. Now I know you!
I met you at the tavern. You
were short of cash then. Take this crown:
drink to the Major, then a health

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to Greenough, and the Rattlesnake.
To Greenough!

ROBIN

You're a fighter.

MAN WITH MASK

I hate war, wars leave us where
they find us, don't they, Boy?
Let's talk about my health.

ROBIN

Where can
I find my kinsman?

MAN WITH MASK

He owned this house.
Men used to find him here all day,
before the storms disturbed his judgement.
He's out now ranging through the town,
looking for new accommodations.
Wait here. Youll meet him on his walk.

(Strides off singing)

The king is in his counting house;
we're counting up his money.

BOY

Why was that fellow's face half red now?
He's changing color.

ROBIN

I don't know.
He is someone out of Revelations—
Hell revolting on its jailers.

*(*THREE WHITE MEN *thinly disguised as* ***Indians cross the stage. They stagger as if they were drunk. One carries a bale marked*** **tea.***)*

FIRST INDIAN

The British thought we were the Deerfield
Indians all rouged up in war-paint.

SECOND INDIAN

They knew us. There'll be hell to pay.

THIRD INDIAN

The tea is boiling in Boston Harbor.

SECOND INDIAN

What about what we took away?

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I wish we'd stuck to principles;
it's piracy to loot the Crown.

THIRD INDIAN

The tea is boiling in Boston Bay.
The party's on the British King.

FIRST INDIAN

And Major Molineux!

THIRD INDIAN

Hurrah
for the Republic!

SECOND INDIAN

Listen! Soldiers!

(Sounds of Rule Britannia, *and marching feet)*

FIRST INDIAN

There's only one. We've lost the other.

THIRD INDIAN

Damn the bloody backs!

FIRST INDIAN

Damn him.

THIRD INDIAN

He's out for blood now.

FIRST INDIAN

Quick! Let's draw
him down a crooked street and scalp him!

SECOND INDIAN

Let's dish the tea!

FIRST INDIAN

Here's a safe church.

THIRD INDIAN

The Church of England!

FIRST INDIAN

Hide it there!
Nobody looks into a church.

SECOND INDIAN

The church is ours!

(The INDIANS *hurriedly hide the bale of tea in the church, and then go off, as an* ENGLISH SOLDIER *enters on the run. Shots, screams.)*

BOY *(Alone with* ROBIN*)*

Those men are whites;

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I know an Indian when I see one.

ROBIN

This is no time to trust your eyes.

BOY

What were they saying about a party?
Is our kinsman entertaining
the town?

ROBIN

Riddles. It's nothing, Brother.
There's no party—just deviltry!
Only devils joke about
Indians. Indians brained a child
against a hearthstone once in Deerfield.
That child was your uncle, Brother.
Indians raped your uncle's mother,
and sold her to a half-breed Frenchman.
We're lost without the British army.

BOY

Perhaps it's only Halloween.

ROBIN

It's murder. We must find the Major.

(The church lights up a little. ROBIN *walks over to it, and looks in a window.)*

Our church is empty, Brother. Moonbeams
are trembling on the snow-pure pews,
the altar's drowned in radiant fog,
a single restless ray has crept
across the open Bible.
(Turns to a gravestone by the church)
I'm lonely.
What's this? A gravestone? A grave? Whose grave?
I think the Major must have died;
everything tells me he is gone
and nothing is forever. *(Turns back to the church)*
Brother,
the moon's the only worshipper!

(The CLERGYMAN *comes out of the church. He lays a white clay pipe on the steps and holds up a little colored celluloid whirligig.)*

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CLERGYMAN

The wind has died.

ROBIN

What are you doing?

CLERGYMAN

I'm playing with this whirligig,
and waiting to see which way the wind
will veer. It's quite amusing, Son,
trying to guess the whims of the wind.
I am waiting for a sign.
A strange thing for a modern churchman.

ROBIN

My father says the Church is a rock.

CLERGYMAN

Even a rock needs eyes. That's why
I shut my eyes in troubled times,
the spirit blows and no one sees it.

ROBIN

I see my father. He's the Deerfield
minister and Church of England.
You remind me of my father.

CLERGYMAN

Be careful, Son. Call no man father:
that's what we tell the Roman clergy;
sometimes I think we go too far,
they get their people out for Mass.

ROBIN

Help me, Father. When I shut
my eyes, I dream I'm back in Deerfield.
The people sit in rows below
the old oak; a horseman stops to water
his horse and to refresh his soul.
I hear my father holding forth
thanksgiving, hope and all the mercies—
but there's a faltering in his voice,
he's speaking of the absent one.
My sister's weeping, now she hides
her eyes behind a branch.

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CLERGYMAN

Those village
pastors! Once they used to preach
as if the world were everlasting;
each Sunday was longer than a summer!
That's gone now. We have competition:
taverns, papers, politics
and trade. It takes a wolfhound now
to catch a flock!

ROBIN

Why are you waiting
for the wind?

CLERGYMAN *(Taking up two little flags)*

Do you see
these two flags? One's the Union Jack,
the other is the Rattlesnake.
The wind will tell me which to fly.

ROBIN

I'm thinking of the absent one.
My kinsman, Major Molineux
is absent. The storms have hurt his house
lately. No one will help me find him.

CLERGYMAN

Perhaps the wind will blow him back.

ROBIN

I met a strange man, Colonel Greenough;
Half of his face was red, and half
was pocked. He said, "Wait here, and you
will meet your kinsman on his walk."

CLERGYMAN

You'd better wait here then. That red
and pocked man tends to speak the truth.

ROBIN

Why was his face two colors, Father?

CLERGYMAN

He is an image of the city.
If his whole face turns red as blood,
We'll have to fly the Rattlesnake.

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ROBIN

Say more about my kinsman, Father.
You said he was your friend and patron.

CLERGYMAN

Poor Molineux! he served the clergy
somewhat better than this city.
He had a special pew, you know.
He used to set a grand example.

ROBIN

He used to! You speak as if he were dead!

CLERGYMAN

Men blamed me, but I liked to watch
his red coat blazing like the sunset
at Sunday morning service here.
He was an easy-going fellow,
a lover of life, no Puritan.
He had invention, used to send
two six foot privates here to help
with the collection. Yes, I had
to like him. He had his flaws, of course.

ROBIN

A red coat blazing like the sunrise,
that's how the Major was in Deerfield;
the gold lion of England shone
on his gilded carriage. He had a little
white scar like a question mark
on his right cheek. He got it killing
Frenchmen. He seemed to hold the world
like a gold ball in the palm of his hand.
Ours for the asking! All! We are
his last relations in the world!

CLERGYMAN

No one will dispute your claim.

ROBIN

He had tea ships, soldiers, and a palace
with a woodbin full of bullion, peacocks
and nigger servants on the lawn.
The Major said he was the King's
intelligence in Massachusetts.

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CLERGYMAN

No one will dispute his claim.

(Shots and screams are heard. The THREE WHITE INDIANS *rush across the stage, chasing the* ENGLISH SOLDIER.*)*

ROBIN

I know those men, they're white men dressed
like savages. Why do they do it?

CLERGYMAN

It's just our boys carousing, Son.
We think a little terrorism
changes boys to men. The watch
will round them up, no doubt, before
they kill us.

ROBIN

I met a girl in scarlet
under the shadow of your church.
She invited us to spend the night,
And said my kinsman dwelt with her.
I think she lied.

CLERGYMAN

We mustn't leap
to rash conclusions. People tell
the truth sometimes. The Major might
consider himself fortunate
to have that woman for his friend.
The Church has often found her useful;
Once preachers had more status. We used
to brand such women with an *A*;
sometimes we hanged them on the Common,
and told them they were damned, damned, damned.
We learn to dance to every wind now;
religion's in this world to stay.

ROBIN

I met a queer man in this street;
he had a little piping voice,
and looked me over like a tailor
smiling. When I asked about
my kinsman, Major Molineux,
he said,

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(Imitating the MAN WITH THE PERIWIG*'s voice)*
"Hem, hem, I'll stick you in the stocks
by peep of day." That chirping man
has gone into the woman's house.

CLERGYMAN
What shall we do with people? They
get worse and worse, but God improves.
God was green in Moses' time;
little by little though, he blossomed.
First came the prophets, then our Lord,
and then the Church.

ROBIN
The Church?

CLERGYMAN
The Church
gets more enlightened every day.
We've learned to disregard the Law
and look at persons. Who is my neighbor?
Anyone human is my neighbor. Sometimes
my neighbor is a man from Sodom.

(Great noise of shouting. ALL FORMER CHARACTERS*, except The* MAN WITH THE MASK*, parade across the stage. Most of them wave Rattlesnake flags.)*

ROBIN
Father, I see two clergymen;
they're waving flags.

CLERGYMAN
I see my sign.
(Snaps the whirligig with his thumb)
Look, the wind has risen! Wherever
the spirit calls me, I must follow.

CROWD
Hurrah for the Republic!
Down with Major Molineux!

(The PEOPLE *sing a verse of* Yankee Doodle*, and draw* COLONEL GREENOUGH *on stage in a red, white and blue cart. He stand up and draws his sword. One can see that his face is now entirely red.)*

MAN WITH MASK
The die is cast!

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ROBIN

Look at the Colonel,
his whole face is red as blood!

MAN WITH MASK

Major Molineux is coming.

CLERGYMAN

Are you sure we're strong enough?

MAN WITH MASK

Every British soldier in Boston
is killed or captured.

CROWD

Don't tread on me!
Don't tread on me! Don't tread on me!

ROBIN

What can I do to help my kinsman?

CLERGYMAN

Swap your flag and save your soul.

ROBIN

I want to save my kinsman, Father.

CLERGYMAN

No, no, Son, do as I do. Here, hold
this flag a moment, while I speak.

(The CLERGYMAN *hands* ROBIN *his Rattlesnake flag, tosses away the whirligig, breaks his clay pipe, then takes a chair and stands on it while he addresses the crowd with both hands raised. Throughout the crowd scene,* ROBIN *stands unconsciously holding the flag and suffering.)*

How long, how long now, Men of Boston!
You've faced the furious tyrant's trident,
you've borne the blandishments of Sodom.
The Day of Judgement is at hand,
now we'll strip the scarlet whore,
King George shall swim in scarlet blood,
Now Nebuchadnezzar shall eat grass.
How long! How long! O Men of Boston,
behave like men, if you are men!

(The people cheer and take the CLERGYMAN *on their shoulders.)*

You've drawn the sword, Boys, throw away
the scabbard!

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(The CLERGYMAN *draws a sword and throws down the scabbard. Many of the* PEOPLE, *including the* PROSTITUTE, *draw swords and throw the scabbards rattling across the stage. They draw* MAJOR MOLINEUX *on stage in a red cart. He is partly tarred and feathered; one cheek is bleeding; his red British uniform is torn; he shakes with terror.)*

ROBIN

Oh my kinsman, my dear kinsman,
they have wounded you!

CLERGYMAN

Forget him!

MAN WITH MASK

Throw the boy from Deerfield out,
he pities Major Molineux.

CLERGYMAN

No, let him stay, he is just a boy.

*(*ROBIN, *unthinking, holds the flag in front of him, while his eyes are fixed in horror and pity on the figure of the* MAJOR. *The* BOY, *unconsciously, too, mingles among the crowd without thinking. Someone asks him to give him some dirt to throw at the* MAJOR *and he unthinkingly picks up some from a basket, and hands it to the* TAVERN KEEPER, *who throws it at the* MAJOR.*)*

ROBIN

(With a loud cry, but unconsciously waving the flag in his grief.)
Oh my poor kinsman, you are hurt!

CROWD

Don't tread on me! Don't tread on me!

(The MAJOR *slowly staggers to his feet. Slowly he stretches out his right arm and points to* ROBIN.*)*

MAJOR MOLINEUX

Et tu, Brute!

TAVERN KEEPER

The Major wants to teach us Latin.

(The CROWD *laughs, and* ROBIN, *once more without thinking, laughs too, very loudly. The* TAVERN KEEPER *goes to the* MAJOR *and hands him a Rattlesnake flag.)*

TAVERN KEEPER

You're out of step, Sir. Here's your flag.

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(The MAJOR *lurches a few steps from the cart, grinds the Rattlesnake underfoot, then turns and addresses the crowd.)*

MAJOR MOLINEUX

Long live King George! Long live King George!
I'll sing until you cut my tongue out!

CROWD

Throw the Major in the river,
in the river, in the river!

(With a grating sound, the FERRYMAN *appears at the side of the stage, pushing the prow of his dory. The* MAJOR *staggers towards the* FERRYMAN.*)*

MAJOR MOLINEUX *(To* FERRYMAN*)*

Help me in my trouble. Let
me cross the river to my King!

(The FERRYMAN *stiffens. The* MAN WITH THE MASK *throws him a silver crown.)*

MAN WITH MASK

Ferryman, here's a silver crown
take him or leave him, we don't care.

FERRYMAN *(Still more threatening)*

The crown's no longer currency.

(The FERRYMAN *kicks the crown into the water.)*

MAJOR MOLINEUX

Boatman, you rowed me here in state;
save me, now that I'm fallen!

FERRYMAN

There's no returning on my boat.

MAJOR MOLINEUX

(Stretching out his hands and grappling with the FERRYMAN*)*

Save me in the name of God!

(The FERRYMAN *pushes the* MAJOR *off and hits him on the head with his oar. The* MAJOR *screams, and lies still.)*

FERRYMAN

He's crossed the river into his kingdom;
all tyrants must die as this man died.

(One by one, the principal characters come up and look at the MAJOR.*)*

CLERGYMAN

He's dead. He had no time to pray.

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I wish he'd called me. O Lord, remember
his past kindness to the Church;
all tyrants must die as this man died.

MAN WITH PERIWIG *(Taking the* MAJOR*'s empty scabbard)*
I have the Major's sword of office;
hem, hem, I have authority.

BARBER
His honor has the hollow scabbard.

MAN WITH PERIWIG
They build men right in England. Take him
all in all, he was a man;
all tyrants must die as this man died.

TAVERN KEEPER *(Holding a poster)*
Look, this poster says the town
of Boston offers a thousand guineas
to anyone who kills the Major.
I'll take his wallet for the cause.
All tyrants must die as this man died.

PROSTITUTE *(Taking the* MAJOR*'s hat)*
I'll need this hat to hide my head.
They build men right in England. Take him
all in all, he was a man;
all tyrants must die as this man died.

MAN WITH MASK *(Plunging his sword in the* MAJOR*)*
Sic semper tyrannis!

FERRYMAN
His fare is paid now;
the Major's free to cross the river.

PROSTITUTE
Horizontal!

(The FERRYMAN *loads* MAJOR MOLINEUX*'s body on his boat, and pushes off.)*

CLERGYMAN *(Coming up to the* MAN WITH MASK*)*
Your hand! I want
to shake your hand, Sir. A great day!

MAN WITH MASK
Great and terrible! There's nothing
I can do about it now. *(Turns to* ROBIN*)*

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Here, Boy, here's the Major's sword,
perhaps, you'll want a souvenir.

*(*CROWD *starts to leave.* ROBIN *and* BOY *alone)*

BOY

The Major's gone. We'll have to go
Back home. There's no one here to help us.

ROBIN

Yes, Major Molineux is dead.

(Starts sadly towards the river)

CROWD

Long live the Republic! Long live the Republic!

BOY

Look, Robin, I have found a flintlock.

*(*ROBIN *looks wistfully at the* CROWD, *now almost entirely gone. He pauses and then answers in a daze.)*

ROBIN

A flintlock?

BOY

Well, that's all I came to Boston for, I guess.
Let's go, I see the ferryman.

ROBIN *(Still inattentive)*

I'm going.

*(*ROBIN *takes his brother's hand and turns firmly towards the city.)*

BOY

Are we returning to the city?

(All the people are gone now, the lights start to go out. A red sun shows on the river.)

ROBIN

Yes, Brother, we are staying here.
Look, the lights are going out,
the red sun's rising on the river.
Where will it take us to? . . . It's strange
to be here on our own—and free.

BOY *(Sighting along his flintlock)*

Major Molineux is dead.

ROBIN

Major Molineux is dead.

CURTAIN

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SOME COMMENTS ON SENATOR GOLDWATER

We invited a number of people to make brief comments on "The Significance of Senator Goldwater's Nomination for President." The contributions are in reply to our letter, in which we said:

"You are of course free to comment in any way you choose, but we would suggest an emphasis less on your personal reactions to Goldwater than on the nature of his appeal. Does he represent a new phenomenon in American politics? Can he be accommodated to the accepted alternatives of political debate in America? Does his popularity represent a temporary dissatisfaction on the part of voters or is it a more permanent consolidation of native conservative and reactionary elements in American society?"

DANIEL BELL

The Goldwater phenomenon is a confluence of two streams in American life: one, the element of moralism, an aspect of the national style; the other, the emergence of the well-to-do "dispossessed."

There has always been a moralizing streak in American life. It is a fundamentalist view of the world in terms of sin, not in which all men are sinners, but in which there are "good guys" and "bad guys," the righteous (and self-righteous) and the sinners. This moralism was most evident in the attempt to regulate spheres of private conduct—Sunday blue-laws, censorship of books, etc. With some significant exceptions, this moralism was rarely carried over into the national political arena.

The national arena, until the thirties, was a small one. The "actors" were from a homogeneous cultural and religious background—small town Protestant—and the issues and interests were primarily

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sectional; even economic interests were organized largely on sectional lines. After the Civil War, the chief test of sectional division, politics became largely a matter of deals and compromise. This was possible because there was an implicit regnant ideology, Americanism, to which all but a few "foreigners" (i.e. Socialists) subscribed. The result was that the moralism was restricted largely to the regulation of private conduct in the communities, while in the national political arena deals and compromise prevailed.

The two major domestic exceptions, coming significantly after the waves of South and East European immigration and the political rise of ethnic groups, were shortly before and after World War I. The first was the effort by the Temperance groups, largely Methodist and Baptist church groups, to enforce national prohibition of liquor, an effort that succeeded initially in Congress (the Volstead Act) and then by a constitutional amendment. The second was the post-war rise of the Ku Klux Klan, especially in the midwest states such as Indiana, where small-town political control of the legislatures was jeopardized by the rise of the urban communities. In both instances, the efforts were limited and the national pattern of deals and expediency, of conciliation and compromise remained.

The major threat to the national system of political compromise came in the thirties and forties in the demand of the labor groups and urban ethnic groups for a sharing of political power. The challenge was accommodated for two reasons: the delicate balancing role of Franklin D. Roosevelt during the depression years, and the national unity fostered by World War II. But one should recall that there was a strong whiff of "class war" in the United States in the late thirties, which ended only when the War Labor Board gave the union movement a strong institutional place in the economic system. After a major test of post-war strikes in the winter of 1945-46, and the subsequent passage of the Taft-Hartley Law, an uneasy but stable compromise was worked out.

It was in foreign policy that the streak of moralism has always been most evident. Lacking a defined sense of national interest, the postures taken were almost invariably moralistic. After World War II, the Truman-Acheson containment doctrine was tailored more realistically to national power. (In retrospect, the Kennan doctrine of containment, with its thesis of the possible break-up of the Soviet international system because of internal strains, was clearly more realistic than the moralistic and adventuristic proclamations of "liberation.") But in the Eisenhower-Dulles years there was a return to the moralizing,

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though in practice there was always the uneasy balance between reckless rhetoric and cautious moves to *détentes*.

This moralism became translated into domestic politics primarily during the McCarthy era. The frustrations of the Korean War, the inability to take a long historical view of social change, made it easy to translate these frustrations of power and omnipotence into a search for the "bad guys" (i.e. the domestic communists and liberals) who had "betrayed" us and weakened the resolve to "fight to the finish."

This moralism, with its simplistic view of world politics and its fear of modernity, is part of the world view of that social stratum that I have called the "Dispossessed." The Dispossessed are those who have lost not wealth, or even immediate political power and status, but a comfortable sense of historical position in the world. They represent a wide social band: the small-town realtor and banker who once knew (and in the locale still knows) the levers of power, but finds the complications of the world scene bewildering and buffeting; the retired army officers and combat-trained soldiers who resent the newer modes of strategy and economic (i.e. cost-effectiveness techniques) planning; the corporation executive who finds that while he may have money and power within an organization, he is uncomfortable with the rise of a new intelligentsia. While the "base" is one of social class, the phenomenon is much more wide-spread; it embraces a whole spectrum of the country who have grown up, and accepted, this moralistic view of the world. In the modern political sense, Barry Goldwater's definition of an extremist is the secular version of the old religious "enthusiast."

The irony and paradox is that both elements, of moralism and dispossession, should be combined in the person of an *ausländer*, Barry Goldwater. Yet it has been a repeatable social phenomenon that the outsider takes on more exaggeratedly, and caricatures, the social mask of an old, established class. (This is most evident in the South where Wallace and Faubus, coming from the poor white heap, should be the most ferocious in defense of established privilege.) It is in this sense, too, that the play-acting of Barry Goldwater has the elements of intellectual farce and sinister politics. It is the angry cry of a social stratum with its back to the world.

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MARTIN B. DUBERMAN

We are, as has often been said, a non-ideological people: we are interested in the immediate problem, not the abstract blueprint; we judge by results, not intentions; we put people above philosophies. To some, this is our "genius"; to others, our substitute for not having any. In any case, Barry Goldwater is said to be an exception. Both his friends and enemies are billing him as an ideologue, a man outside the pragmatic main stream. Unlike other politicians, we are told, Goldwater is devoted to a particular philosophy of government, has a detailed program for implementing it, and will not be swerved from either for mere temporary advantage.

There is some limited truth to the billing. Goldwater does hold fast to a few broad convictions—that the federal government should be less active in its domestic policies and more active in its foreign ones. To have an "ideology" of even this extent, may seem to set Goldwater apart from the typical American politician, but the contrast is problematic—surely most of our officeholders, at least if pressed, would subscribe to similarly vague, simplistic beliefs, even if not of the same vintage.

In any case, a few stubborn prejudices do not make an ideologue, any more than an emotion is an idea or a hazy predilection the same as a concrete program. If the label "ideologue" is to have any meaning, it must be reserved for those who have thought out a detailed blueprint for bringing a particular politico-social vision into being. The ideologue, in other words, concerns himself with means as well as ends.

Goldwater is not such a man. He may wish to return to laissez faire at home and the big stick abroad, but he has no program for achieving those goals. From time to time he has made some concrete policy suggestions—"defoliation," pulling out of the United Nations, restricting social security, withdrawing recognition from Russia—but on all, he has subsequently hedged or retracted, leaving it apparent that if he has a program, it is scarcely visible.

The image of Goldwater as an ideologue could, if allowed to persist, bring him widespread popular support, though it may seem paradoxical to suggest that such a reputation could arouse enthusiasm in our non-ideological country. But it may be that the country is moving away from its utilitarian attitudes, shifting, under the accumulated weight of domestic and international tensions, from pragmatism to dogmatism. One hears more and more discontent with the

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lack of "guiding principles" in national life, with policies of piecemeal drift rather than active mastery. We need leaders, it is said, who know what this country stands for, and who have positive plans for implementing its ideals and preserving its interests.

The sources of this attitude are various: the WASP hankering for an "older America," reinforced by a conviction that present problems have been "manufactured" by conspirators and aliens; a genuine alarm that character and purpose have somehow departed from American life; a childish intolerance of tension, made more furiously impatient still by our chronic insistence that all problems have solutions.

With this backlog of irritability, there are noticeable yearnings for "a man with answers," enough yearning so that the positive voice could be confused with the clear one, words with deeds, fantasies with realities. Goldwater's supporters will continue to present him as a man with "a plan for America," for they know the appeal of that slogan. His opponents, unfortunately, are selling the same image, apparently in the expectation that our traditionally pragmatic people will be repelled by an ideologue. But there is enough discontent and nostalgia in the air to suggest that they might be attracted instead. By helping to create a false image, the opposition could end by electing a false prophet.

GEORGE P. ELLIOTT

The list of the several ingredients of Goldwaterism contains nothing very new. A more decisive anti-Communist foreign policy: nothing unfamiliar about that, except that Goldwater has even more zeal than most Presidents and presidential candidates for risking the end of our world. Racism: the untraditional quality here is that it has become so unrespectable as to be, officially, covert rather than flagrant. Suspicion of Eastern money men: the only thing currently worthy of comment about this popular prejudice is to wonder at the political insularity which ever imagined that a man with the name *Rockefeller* could have been elected President. Individualism, hatred of restraints on economic freedom, suspicion of federal controls: standard ingredients, all corroded (as they usually are) by the profound American belief in the holiness of property and profit. And so on, from self-reliance to lower income taxes. Nearly all Goldwater's supporters are rejoicing in

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the liberation of hoary, strong prejudices which the moderately liberal rule of the past thirty-two years has sicklied over or thwarted or even outlawed. After the boil of their resentment has burst and drained, politically they will follow their leader towards the center, where the electoral power is.

The ingredients of Goldwaterism could of course be put together in such a way as to form a fascist totality. Anti-Communism is ideologically a more cohesive force than the conservatives' now-dominant motive, profit, and one prays that they never will allow anti-Communism to become their over-riding obsession. The logic of it goes something like this. Communism is the source of so many of the evils of the modern world that to extirpate and destroy it is to weaken the powers of socialism, statism, liberalism, until they cease to be unmanageable dangers as they are now. All means are justified to exterminate socialism and Communists, and to triumph over liberalism. If we must use the enemy's methods to defeat him, then we will do so. . . . There is enough of this in Goldwater's occasional utterances and in the philosophy of some of his extremer backers to be disturbing. Also, he has near him at least one man who can think, William Buckley, an all-or-none theocratic zealot of the most dangerous kind. (I heard Buckley address a good-sized college audience last year on the subject of American foreign policy. His criticism of the faults of the liberal rulers of the nation was incisive and accurate; his forensic power and control were by far the greatest I have heard in an American speaker; and his locating in Marxism the excisable source of the sepsis vitiating modern man seemed to entrance his listeners by its persuasive force as deeply as it appalled me by its simplism.) Buckley intends no fascism, but his fearful hatred is so nearly total that his counsels might well become totalitarian with the heat turned up, as it will be if Goldwater gets into power. Buckley now supplies Goldwater with a good many of his ideas, though perhaps not with the worst ones. The danger would be if Goldwater allowed him to provide some sort of intellectual coherence as well.

But I doubt that this danger of fascism will be realized, primarily because I doubt that Goldwater will be elected—too many voters are moderate enough to fear some of his extreme views. And even if he is elected, I doubt that anything very fascistic will come of it. Partly this is because Goldwater's chief body of supporters is no better organized than is his own mind. (The Constitution Party is right to have rejected him as Presidential candidate for being too flexible.) Fascist organization is hard work and demands much purity of zeal, and with-

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out large-scale organization of storm-troopers there can be no violent seizure of power. Rioters, lynchers, and fantasy cowboys America has in plenty, but where are the disciplined thugs? In the gangs, of course—devoting themselves to the most American of enterprises, making money. I think that the largest and most enduring reason not to fear Goldwater fascism, or anything close to it, is money. No political issue would justify for Republicans—or many other Americans—the sacrifice of the right and power to make money. What's good for General Motors is good for the nation, but what is good for fascism is sometimes bad for General Motors—the destruction of civilization, for example. Also, an American is poor only if he personally is worthless or unfortunate, and no political action can remedy those conditions. (This belief is another profoundly traditional ingredient of Goldwaterism.) It comes down to this: fascist anti-Communism means total war, which is obviously unprofitable; let's keep our anti-Communism profitable, which means more Cold War. Which means, in fact, status pretty much quo ante Goldwater. Let us not derogate our prodigal avarice and our national disinclination to organize politically.

Goldwater's conservatism is even more detestable than the muddled liberalism by which we have long been ruled, and it has even fewer virtues. But he is right: it is the only available alternative. Having the one, we had better have the other, so that every citizen can have a clear choice of what to vote against.

RICHARD HOFSTADTER

Barry Goldwater is something new, very new, in our politics. As a rule, such men have flourished only in minor parties, yet he has not only won the nomination but gained unusually firm control over a major party. Normally a major party nomination is won partly by establishing predominant popularity among its voters and partly by accommodating other party leaders. Goldwater has won without doing either, but by arousing great intensity of conviction among a minority of enthusiasts, and then imposing upon this minority a tight disciplinary structure. Hitherto our major parties have not been founded on ideologies: they have worked by arranging continual compromises among heterogeneous interests, and they have been led by men of

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much experience not merely in organizing partisans but in meeting the practical problems of state. Goldwater is now creating a party dominated by an uncompromising minority faction of uncommon discipline and dedication, and led by a millennial dreamer, a visionary without experience in solving any of the real problems of our public life. Despite Goldwater's apparent post-Convention concessions to the Republican moderates, he has already made the Republican party into a front organization for a minority point of view.

Control of a major party brings to Goldwater and his peculiar notions a measure of respectability and legitimation that they have not had before, and gives him a platform from which he can maximize the effect of right-wing views. It also gives him a strong position from which to form a new kind of political union, which will be based on jingoism, economic ultra-conservatism, and racial animosity. Of the primary emotional forces upon which he depends—social resentments, economic greed, and messianic idealism—it is the last which is most dangerous, for Goldwater draws upon a deep millennial strain in the American consciousness, and mobilizes all our impatience with the maladies of modernity and the innumerable constraints of the contemporary world. His most ardent followers respond not to his supposed conservatism, which is shallow and meaningless, but to the allure of his utopian visions, embracing on one side a return to long-vanished entrepreneurial conditions and on the other a total victory (*sans* casualties and *sans* income tax) in the cold war.

I believe that Goldwater's rise to prominence, far from being a momentary thing, rests upon forces constantly at work in our society, clearly visible at least since the Korean War, and now intensified by the racial crisis, which itself seems to be unresolvable. For this reason, a defeat in the election, unless it is overwhelming, probably will not go far to dislodge Goldwater's grip on the Republican party. Such a defeat would have to be followed by an extraordinarily united and determined effort on the part of the Republican moderates, of which they do not appear today to be capable. It is still possible, then, that Goldwater, if beaten, could re-take the renomination in 1968, perhaps under circumstances more auspicious for his election. Ten years ago, assessing the impact of McCarthyism and related tendencies in an article on "The Pseudo-Conservative Revolt," I observed that, in a political culture like ours, "in which it is possible to exploit the wildest currents of public sentiment for private purposes, it is at least conceivable that a highly organized, vocal, active and well-financed

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minority could create a political climate in which the rational pursuit of our well-being and safety would become impossible." Today we seem a giant step closer to such an eventuality.

JOHN HOLLANDER

Senator Goldwater's nomination has been an esthetic prank and a moral disaster; it remains to be seen whether it will have been a total political catastrophe as well. The biggest problems posed by his candidacy are clouded in uncertainties which themselves seem to lie at the heart of the problem. In any particularly dramatic time in American politics, two kinds of myth struggle for control of any rational observer's feelings. One is apocalyptic: "Here's the showdown, finally, the Real Thing." The other is pragmatic: "Don't be melodramatic: things like that don't happen that way here, now, to us." In the case of last fall's assassination, for example, the question whether or not the event was political at all constitutes a version of just such a struggle. The extreme of one view is paranoia; the other shades off into a total acceptance of American political institutions as they are that seems almost as insane. Each position eyes the other with contempt; from moment to moment, each can become very attractive.

With the current campaign, all this has intensified rather than becoming resolved. It is almost impossible to feel sure either that Goldwater will turn out to have been a major threat or a kind of symptomatic but nonetheless contemptible political buffoon. His supporters, the Yahoos of respectability, may or may not turn out to be the analogues of the German petit-bourgeois trash of Hitler's rise. Some of the direct political consequences of the nomination seem salutary—Johnson's refusal so far to be pushed to the right on the vice-presidential choice, at least, and the generally unique milieu which will enable me to vote Democratic without the slightest qualm about the composition of the popular front with which I shall be voting. But they only make the election seem more like Armageddon; as the days go by, my paranoia seems to be gaining the upper hand.

The reasonable view, perhaps, would hold either that there is no chance of Goldwater's winning the election or that if he *did* win things wouldn't be as bad as all *that*. I find neither of these suggestions wholly impressive, and yet I would like to be able to cure my own

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most absurd fantasies—a Goldwater presidency unrolling itself like a bad thriller, cabinets full of Walkers and Tellers, condoned vigilantism everywhere—with the aid of some reasonable remedy. But I'm afraid that a dose of crackpot realism right now might be toxic. Of course, the Republican presidential campaign may emerge as such a political fiasco that, on the morning after election night, we will be asking ourselves what corny, literary, European misrepresentation of American political realities could have led us to be afraid, in the first place, that Goldwater would do much better than Landon? But even if it does, even if the pompous clichés about the utter workability of our two-party system are reinforced, the whole affair of Goldwater's nomination—the man, his parody of a running-mate and his backers all being regurgitated into World Events at a moment like this with the force of a sick joke—is one of the most morally disgusting events in American history.

JACK LUDWIG

The Movement

William Rusher, publisher of *The National Review*, understandably high these days, recently put it this way: "The conservative movement found Senator Goldwater, Senator Goldwater found the movement; it was like the meeting of the Blue and the White Nile." Rusher also added—significantly, I think—that "what the liberals had better understand is that we're here to stay, that we're a serious force in American political life, with respectable politicians and intellectual organs *at our command*" (unfortunately the italics are only mine).

The Rightist attitudes are old; what's new is the organization, the escalating of crankiness and resentment into a "conservative philosophy." Newer still is success. The key word is *win*. *Win* in Korea, *win* in Vietnam, *win* in San Francisco. Fanaticism merges with teleology. Tax nuts, Roosevelt-haters, TVA-haters, Kennedy-haters, anti-Communist crusaders, pasters-of-"Red"-labels-on-Polish-hams, fluoridophobes, veterans yearning for the good exciting *win* days, old maids afraid of rape by a Negro, pinchy property owners, county political hacks, unrequited precinct captains are told by Barry, "Together we can win." San Francisco is the demonstration. The despised and rejected, who for years had to tuck away their crotchets and join the elegant Republican toffs from Bos-

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ton and New York, got exactly what Goldwater promised—a win. The vulgar TV bloodletting of Nelson Rockefeller was essential: "Here—have a go at him—we told you the Eastern Big Shots were nothing."

The Convention

The moderates couldn't believe their tabulators. For three or four years Goldwater worked the states in which Republican voters were not much more numerous than the delegates. But a Southern or Far Western delegate's vote *counted* in San Francisco.

The A.P. score kept mounting. Long before the convention it reached 600, then 700. The moderates didn't believe Goldwater could hold that number *because the conservatives never had held together before.* What they ignored was that same *win* factor. Those who backed Goldwater in a state contest, and won, were easily convinced that backing him in San Francisco would also win.

The key to the movement, the convention, the campaign, is *local control.* Just as lobbyists switched pressure from Washington to campaign contributors in congressional districts so Goldwater has been successful district by district, precinct by precinct, block by block. The "States' Rights" cry is not only an essential part of the philosophy East and North as well as West and South, it's even more essential as strategy and tactics. Return power to the locality, goes the conservative message, because in the precinct we have our now newly-requited hard core. Don't laugh at the old ladies in tennis shoes: how many stores invaded by them still have Polish hams on the shelf? How does it happen that year in, year out, school bond items in child-teeming, affluent, commuter communities around New York and other large cities are defeated?

Someone merged the old ladies with the serious young boys of the campus conservative clubs; *someone* told the delegates to submerge during hearings on the platform and then bust loose when Nelson Rockefeller tried to speak; *someone* planted twelve Goldwaterites on the thirty-man steering committee of Governor Scranton; *someone* saw the necessity of not compromising one comma with the moderates, and jamming the nation's least attractive vice-presidential candidate down their Brooks Brothers-collared throats. The worm turned. The Rightists had their big last laugh. Who, four years ago, would have predicted that the ex-PR man entrusted with writing part of the platform for a major political party in 1964 would be James Burnham?

The Campaign

The tactics that won delegates will be used to try to win an election. Doorbells will be rung with *one issue per house*: the Commies

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are 90 miles away; the Negroes are wrecking *our* nice, clean, safe neighborhoods. Goldwater will continue to be vague; in the bowling alleys, bars, and living rooms his workers will search out and develop one concrete fix and fear. A quota has already been set for every voting district in the country.

Goldwater's national appeal will be tangential. It's hard to conduct a whispering campaign over coast-to-coast television; easy at the precinct level.

The campaign is pitched at the prol. The Rightists, who quote and use Lenin *and* Pareto, Mao Tse-Tung *and* Hitler, have themselves a man with a cracker-barrel philosopher's voice, Clark Kent's jaw and glasses, and a *Terry and the Pirates* view of the Cold War. With him they will try to take over the masses.

HANS J. MORGENTHAU

Goldwater's candidacy is a portentous and ominous event. It is so by virtue of the conjunction of three factors.

Goldwater continues and strengthens the romantic disposition which has dominated the Republican party since 1932 and led it from defeat to defeat; the Eisenhower victories are mere accidents proving the rule. That Goldwater has taken away the Republican party from the liberals is a myth created by his liberal opponents in order to justify their own position within the Republican party. As an analysis of persons and doctrines would show, Goldwater's philosophy represents the same romantic longing for the restoration of a golden age of individual responsibility, free enterprise, a passive federal government, a balanced budget, American omnipotence abroad, which has been the day-dream of the Republican party since 1932. Goldwater did not impose an alien philosophy upon the Republican party. Rather, he rescued its deepest convictions from the adulteration administered to them by a liberal minority and the practical politicians.

What distinguishes Goldwater from his predecessors as Republican candidates for the Presidency is not his philosophy but his apparent willingness to put that philosophy into practice. Goldwater is a simple, straightforward, and unsophisticated man. He gives the appearance of meaning what he says. He appears to be determined to act the Re-

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publican day-dream out. It is this appearance that constitutes his charisma. It evokes the enthusiasm of his supporters and the fearful doubts of more sophisticated Republicans for whom Republican romanticism is acceptable only as long as it is nothing more than a spurious incantation incapable of disturbing a satisfactory status quo.

This romantic activism of Goldwater is given an opportunity for action in the emergence, extraordinary in American history, of a genuine nationwide conservative position, in contrast to the spurious literary conservatism on which so much debate has recently been wasted. That is the position of the segregationists North and South, intent upon preserving the status quo ante 1954. The transformation of a sectional conservative position into a nationwide one, coincident with the rise of a romantic activist as a national leader, constitutes the ominous novelty of our situation.

If Goldwater should win, his victory will bring to power not the romantics who can dream of the golden age yet are prevented by the stubborn facts of the contemporary world from returning to it, but the conservatives who in the status quo of segregation have a concrete political goal susceptible of political action. Yet since the conservative segregationists are a permanent minority, they could govern the nation only as they govern most of the Southern states: not with the consent of the governed but with violence over them. If Goldwater should lose, the Republican party will sink into the impotence of a virtually permanent minority party, a threat to the democratic order rather than to the Democratic party. Both Goldwater's victory and defeat, then, conjure up a threat to the democratic order, that is, the threat of fascism in America.

WILLIAM PHILLIPS

The Goldwater campaign has few aspects that are not grim. But we might at least find some satisfaction in seeing that the Right seems to have almost as much trouble getting anywhere in this country as the Left.

I do not mean that the Right is as small or as weak as the Left. But up to now, it is only when the Left or Right has accommodated itself to the now accepted patterns of American thinking that they have had any effect—or meaning. America is, of course, the great land of the

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middle; and its peculiar combinations of primitivism and sophistication, achieved through adjustment, balance, checks, compromise, muddling through, fear of extremes, and seeming resistance to explicit ideologies—all these forms for canceling out or concealing conflicts represent a triumph of middle-class civilization. This centrist Utopia, dedicated to the philosophy of the middle, has been like a great blotter, soaking up radical as easily as conservative ideas, and giving everything, including the most outrageous acts and ideas a uniform look.

So far, the Goldwater strategists have shown they have learned their history lesson. Since the rumpus created by Senator Goldwater's earlier expressions of fondness for extremists, he has been trying hard to act like a man whose bark is bigger than his bite, which is the standard form of politicking in this country. Sure, Senator Goldwater has been sounding off about American manhood standing up to the menace of Communism, but in such a vague and contradictory way that one wonders whether the war or the peace talk is the vote-getter. It is now expected that a presidential nominee, particularly a Republican, must accuse the President of being soft on Communism; but Goldwater has been balancing his brinksmanship lately with the argument that a "soft" policy leads to war. Actually, Goldwater has been more extreme on domestic issues, where he probably felt he could get away with it.

I do not mean to minimize the ugliness of the forces and ideas that have moved in on the Republican party. I have always been uneasy about the neanderthalism lurking in the so-called average man; and the experience of fascism shell-shocked my generation into a fear of everything on the Right, which probably leads us to exaggerate the political meaning of things that are just stupid, or philistine, or mercenary. No doubt it is more decent—and safer—to overestimate rather than to underestimate the "menace of fascism" at any moment. But it is also not very interesting or useful to trot out the old clichés whenever the Right begins to stir. It could be that the political witticism that fascism will come in the guise of anti-fascism here will turn out to be true. But in

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is the one magazine that must be read wide awake.

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that case we would have to increase the number of danger-signals to the point where the whole question would lose its meaning.

What makes it particularly difficult to foresee the political direction of Senator Goldwater and of the Republican party is that the middle--of-the-roadism of the country which transforms the face of Senator Goldwater into that of the guy next door also muffles and obscures the mass of general opinion. The real meaning of the polls is just the opposite of the claims they make; what they show is that most people don't know what they think. Because our parties do not sufficiently reflect genuine political and economic differences, people rarely get a clear shot at the issues. Hence, when someone like Senator Goldwater comes along it is almost impossible to tell what people think he thinks and what they feel about him. I find myself swaying in my estimate of his chances of election not on the basis of any facts or meaningful impressions but on whether I am feeling generally optimistic or pessimistic. In the past one always thought the radical Right was a haven for cranks and nuts, but when traditional conservatism is invaded by the radical Right it is very difficult to predict not only the vote but the political consequences for the future.

There is also another sense in which one might speak of the political unpredictability of the country, which is built into its very structure. If there is no natural outlet for programs, ideas, frustrations, discontents, in existing party platforms and vistas, then political expression is bound to take on a spasmodic, explosive, violent form, particularly in times of crisis. Hence we might suddenly find the radical Right spurting in power and influence, without going through all the steps our past experience has prescribed for its development.

So far, the radical Right—and Senator Goldwater—have been trading on two critical situations, the tensions produced by the civil rights movement and the stalemate with Russia. As for the so-called white back-lash, I do not see it as a permanent basis for an anti-Negro party. Whiteness is still not a political color here. But the frustration of the anti-Communists is here to stay, and will probably increase as the power of the Soviet Union or China grows. But there is really no alternative—besides dropping the bomb—to the policies of Kennedy or Johnson, because the possibilities are limited by objective circumstances and the demands of sanity. (Greater intelligence can't hurt, but doesn't mean more choices.) So the crazy Right has the choice either of coming out openly for nuclear war or continuing to double-talk about acting tough without saying just how. If we are to go on past experience at all, I don't think the American people will vote for their own destruction. Nor is

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double-talk sufficient to mobilize the crusading spirit a right-wing movement requires. But who knows where stupidity and obfuscation can lead in this period.

If the center should keep eating the Right the immediate question is whether the Right or the center will be transformed. The answer, I suppose, lies in what happens to the country. Affluence and the absence of any large threats to stability and serenity have kept the digestive system of the center in good shape. But the balance could be upset if our difficulties should get out of hand.

In this respect even the seemingly harmless and absurd clichés of the Right are always sinister. But the self-righteous liberal clichés—now out in full-force to meet the new threat—won't help us much so long as they hide those real problems which the Right tries to exploit.

RICHARD POIRIER

In Atlantic City during the Democratic Convention there was a disturbing reminder of the nature of Goldwater's appeal: a huge sign bearing only his picture and the admonition that, "You know in your heart he's right." I was disturbed in part by the guilty feeling that words so strangely affecting ought to have come not from Goldwater but from people of my own, quite opposite political persuasion; and I was disturbed also by the evidence that Goldwater has appropriated the present opportunity, also available to the people who oppose him, for an essentially radical political appeal to the increasing number of people who are discontented and frustrated by the narrowness, the tedious repetitiousness that characterize our national politics. The sign called for assent to unstated propositions already shared by people of widely different political allegiances: that "in our hearts" we do feel that since 1945 we have not always been honest about ourselves, our relations to one another or to other peoples; that "in our hearts" we know that political debate in America is mostly fraudulent, concerned often with non-existent issues like "balanced budget," and that we've accepted this fraudulence when, as in Kennedy's debates with Nixon, it has served our partisan interests; that "in our hearts" we would welcome someone—and he'd have to be

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pretty far out—who'd initiate discussions of policy in terms outside the now accepted areas of public debate. Such a man, exceeding what are assumed to be the realistic alternatives of national policy, would perforce appear to be "unintelligent." In fact, the sign played quite directly on the not absurd suspicion that the truth must be in our hearts because it cannot be in our heads, filled as they have been on various occasions with childish lies, many of them later contradicted by other lies, about the Bay of Pigs, about China and Vietnam, about the details of the assassination, about our preparedness, about Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Batista, about the number of racial murders in Mississippi, where the search for the three murdered Civil Rights workers happened to stumble over a couple of unexpected Negro corpses as a sort of fringe benefit.

In accounting for the appeal of Goldwater it doesn't matter that he's intellectually incapable of telling even himself the truth about his stand on most issues. What does matter is that Goldwater has recognized the drift of many people toward some radical reassessment of the way we are conducting ourselves. Those liberals who scoff at such a development should remember the recent history of some of their friends. Surely the mental processes that can lead to a vote for Goldwater ought to be appreciated by those who in 1948 found it possible to justify a vote for Wallace. The kind of reasoning behind a vote for either of these men involves a desire to make American politics something more than a form of management. And Wallace, humanely on the side of that abstraction called humanity, was as out of touch with any kind of reality as is Goldwater whose only issues are abstractions. Goldwater's appeal has little to do with anything dignified by the term "conservatism," and his wretched showing in the primaries should dissuade any but the most hysterical from jowl shakings about "the American people," those Others, with their love of violence, their desire for easy solutions, etc., etc., etc., all the brutal platitudes. Goldwater's popularity represents nothing so much as a deep boredom with politics that infects the nation and that infected his Republican opposition before California, sapping what energy and power they had left after years of trying to smuggle an identity from the Democrats. This same pervasive boredom makes even those anxious to vote for Johnson feel unsure that he won't turn into a heavy fog bank before November. Remembering Truman's defeat of Dewey can't give a Democrat much comfort these days. Truman campaigned, much as will Goldwater, as a loner against the Establishment. He brilliantly exploited what he recognized even in 1948 as an ever ready contempt in

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this country for the people—he called them the Do-Nothing Congress—who govern it.

It is only initially remarkable that this kind of disgust exists at the two extremes of the electorate: with a mass of people who know next to nothing and with the liberal, highly informed intelligentsia. The one group has been made to feel increasingly that politics is no longer concerned with them, with people at all, as it was in the time of Roosevelt; the other knows enough to feel contempt for the games going on year in and year out about some of the compelling issues of our time, like medicare. It isn't surprising in such a situation, as the contemporary history of Germany, Italy, and Spain attest, that the Right should seize the radical initiative precisely at the moment when a similar opportunity lies open to the Left. Kennedy seemed about ready to grasp that opportunity in the months before his death. Though he was cautiously conservative in his first year in office, his speeches in the final year, especially about relations with the USSR, were liberatingly audacious. Even Castro has expressed admiration for the direction which Kennedy gave, and which has since been reversed, to the Alliance for Progress. His election and his increasing popularity revealed that there exists in the country a readiness to accept some of the radical innovations he was apparently preparing to make, and some of those he did make, to our enormous benefit, in fiscal thinking and policy. The glamor he exuded had much to do with personal style, but the response to it was to the evident distaste in that style for the old pomposities and chicaneries. Though one may argue about the translation into actual policy of the image he projected, he did release many people from the tedium of political stereotypes, the feeling, which is the terrible price the nation must pay for General Eisenhower, that daring and intelligence are somehow in bad taste. (The danger in the present situation is less from Goldwater's election—Johnson will first put the country in his wife's name, as one wag has remarked—than from the tired style of rhetoric and of political intrigue which emanates from this administration.) Personally and politically Johnson cannot convince anyone that he is interested in serious innovations in national policy, especially not the people under thirty-five who now constitute the great mass of the population. The changes in our system, such as in the structure of Congress or in the relation of the labor force to automated industries, that are recognized by more and more people as necessities are not the kind that can be produced merely by political techniques, of which Johnson is a master. Should the Democratic party remain bound solely to him for eight more years, then the boredom with

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politics that is beginning to turn into a flirtation with radicalism will be answered increasingly from the Right, and by men more impressive and not less dangerous than Goldwater.

PHILIP RAHV

Quite a few years after the prophets of "the end of ideology"—by which they really meant the voluntary demobilization of the Left and grateful acceptance of the status quo—have established their sway among the intellectuals, we are witnessing the emergence of Goldwaterism as a major force on the political scene in effective control of one of our big national parties. The Republican party has now been turned into a movement, European style, an ideological movement through and through. Thus ideology comes to minatory life on the far Right after it has been all but abandoned by the Left. The vaunted pragmatism of American politics and the assumed supremacy of "the moderate consensus" are shown up to be very limited notions, partial and precarious truths at best. And among the conditions favorable to the rise of Goldwaterism has been the complete absence of organized pressure from the Left; free from such pressure, the Johnson Administration moves to the Right and conservative opinion is lured by Rightist adventurers. As for the so-called Negro revolt, what it mainly represents is an attempt to break into the present system, not to shatter it. Yet even so, without the resentment it has inspired among whites, Goldwater would command no such following as he does today.

The Senator from Arizona, who plays up to the most backward elements in American life, is a naive idealist of foolish ideas, mostly taken from those extreme groups on the Right (like the little Politbureau on the *National Review,* Buckley, Burnham, Myers, *et al*) who combine a defense of the nineteenth-century model of Capitalism with an attack on Big Government and, above all, with endless and loud clamor on the theme of the "Communist menace." What it all comes to, objectively speaking, is an alibi for conquering state-power. It should be obvious that what with the Sino-Soviet split, a split we did not promote but of which we are the chief beneficiaries, and the growing independence of Moscow's satellites in Eastern Europe, Communism is far less of a threat now than it was only a decade ago. Our hard-nosed

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Cold Warriors are interested in Communism, which they would be forced to invent if it did not exist, principally as a means of frightening the electorate and creating an artificial popular demand for their own elevation to power.

As for the agitation against Big Government, in so far as it is not merely a tactic on the part of the racists with their transparently opportunist embrace of States' Rights, it is taken seriously only by the more simple-minded and provincial zealots. For the Republican candidate's ideological mentors it is no more than a means to an end. If they succeed in grasping power—a success which is possible though not probable—they will surely expand rather than contract the sway of the Federal government, and the danger is that they might well see to it that this year's election is our last free election. Once in control of the executive power, they are unlikely to surrender it. Devotees of the McCarthyite strategy of smear, intimidation and purge, they might well attempt to disorganize and then outlaw the opposition. If your dogma is such as to equate liberals with socialists and socialists with Communists, and at the same time you have a vast police and spy apparatus at your disposal, then the way is opened for large-scale purges of the Hitler and Stalin pattern.

Goldwater and his zealots are not conservative in any intelligible sense of the term. They are out-and-out reactionaries. It takes very little political sophistication to see that Goldwater is not in the least a replica of the late Senator Taft, who was genuinely a conservative. His movement represents a recrudescence on American soil of precisely those super-nationalistic and right-wing trends that were finally defeated in Europe at the cost of a great war, untold misery, and many millions dead. No wonder Europeans, with that experience back of them, regard Goldwater with horror.

The basic illusion that the Goldwater reactionaries manipulate is that of American omnipotence. Even though they know consciously that the cost of a nuclear war is wholly unacceptable, when it comes to the emotional and psychological realization of this fact they simply black out. For such a realization would mean the collapse of their system of assumptions, of their entire political world-view. Hence they are now trying to bluff us with their theory of bluff. Their story is that if you push the Russians hard enough they are certain to give up without fighting all the gains they made in the Second World War. But what if at some point they stop appeasing us and decide to resist no matter what the consequences? The Goldwater theory of bluff is grotesque and in the last analysis almost criminally irresponsible.

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RICHARD SCHLATTER

Senator Goldwater's nomination is *not* significant for the obvious reasons which have been mentioned over and again by the political columnists. What they tell us is true enough: he has managed to unite, as no one before him, all the "anti's," all the crackpots of the extreme Right, all the ignorant and prejudiced and bitter whose insecurities and grievances, often real enough, lead them to hatreds and to bigotries and to the creation of scapegoats. Senator Goldwater, perhaps to his own surprise, found all these groups supporting him. His simple-minded and ignorant idealism, his vague but strongly-felt moral fervor, his rhetorical support of Americanism, peace *and* war with victory, justice *and* vigilantism against the devils who beset us, reckless derring-do *and* security for all, have made him the hero of these frustrated fringe groups who normally have little to say in the affairs of the country. He also, of course, reflects the recurrent sectionalism of American politics—in this case, the South and West against the decadent East: he will certainly make a speech sometime during the campaign aimed at financiers and monopolists and big-city corruption.

But all this is *not* very significant. Anyone might have had the luck to unite these groups and appeal to their hatreds, fears, bigotries and frustrations. But, there are not enough of them to elect the Senator in November. Unless he can get support from other major groups, the frustrated will merely go down in humiliating defeat once more.

The real significance, I think, of Senator Goldwater's nomination is that it has demonstrated that we are all part of the American Establishment. For the moment at least, the Republican party, which is traditionally the party of the East, of Big Business, and of conservative Eisenhower Do-Nothings has become the party of the Know Nothings. On the other side, liberals, conservatives, and radicals have discovered, in their reaction against Senator Goldwater, that they are all one under the skin, that they are all supporters of the status quo and that there are no basic disagreements between intellectuals, bankers, trade unionists, artists, big businessmen, beatniks, professional people, and politicians, to name a few, or between economic classes. Thoughtful men support the present administration because there is no alternative. There are no real critics, no new ideas, no fundamental differences of opinion or of aims. Some of us may criticize this or that policy, some of us may wish that the President were more radical or more conservative. But in the end we support him without undue

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pain or frustration. The nomination of Senator Goldwater has demonstrated clearly, and perhaps to our surprise and chagrin, that we are politically divided into only two groups, the Establishment and the rabble, and that we of the Establishment have no basic moral or intellectual or political differences.

WILLIAM TAYLOR

Our own recent experience should tell us that in political style of the kind possessed by a Kennedy or a Goldwater we are confronting something much more powerful than ideas. Goldwater is a politician who is virtually pure "style," and the speed with which support for him is materializing suggests how incomplete the consensus contrived by Kennedy and continued by Johnson really is. What Goldwater communicates to his following is somewhat different from what he tells them. To Kennedy's delight in detail and relish for the technical complexity of policy-making, Goldwater contrapuntally offers, in fact personifies, a contrasting view. Vague himself, inconsistent, often misinformed, he seems to suggest that we have been making too much of government, taking it too seriously and making it seem more complex and difficult than it is. We have in other words been taken in by the hocus-pocus of the technocracy.

Tweedy, prosperous, apparently poised and genial, Goldwater still exhibits little confidence in his own political and military second-guessing and his random comments on the fallacy of Big Government appear to be made in obvious discomfort. It is not skill with ideas or even political skills of a conventional kind that are needed, he appears to feel, but a new kind of sense of moral urgency. While his mouth forms the platitudes of moral righteousness, however, Goldwater stands before us more a figure of good intentions than rectitudes. One may fumble and look a little ridiculous, he seems to be saying of extremist groups, but if you *mean* well you are a patriot. Goldwater's modesty before ideas or people is one of the most conspicuous things about him. In the acknowledgements to his books (which are, unlike Kennedy's, explicitly labeled "ghost-written") and in the somewhat awkward pose of hands-in-pocket, he is openly self-deprecating. Again Goldwater stands in marked contrast to Kennedy, who exuded a delight in the exercise of power and a confidence in the sufficiency of intelligence unmatched by our political leaders. It is characteristic of Goldwater that he should want to divide with his military leaders

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the responsibility for the use of atomic weapons, just as it was characteristic of Kennedy that he should have insisted upon making all important governmental decisions himself.

The most puzzling thing about Goldwater is, in fact, the very absence of the qualities of leadership that might be expected to accompany the neo-Burkean brand of conservatism he sometimes mouths. It seems unlikely, for example, that he would be more apt, say, than Lyndon Johnson to push the red button, as Democrats have taken to claiming. The more Goldwater talks about American foreign policy the clearer it becomes that his appeal is not so much to imperialism in the form of naked national self-assertion as to simplicity and economy: to the reiterated fact that the regulation of our relations, both diplomatic and military, must be clarified and reduced to a minimum. In this respect he is a crypto-isolationist with immense appeal among those who have never "bought" our new foreign commitments. The one facet of executive power that Goldwater appears to endorse without qualification (sometimes to the dismay of his states' rights supporters) is the police power. For him the national government is essentially a policeman. Neither Goldwater nor those who support him, one may be sure, want war any more than the rest of us. They differ from other Americans in their incapacity to imagine any political resolution of existing world tensions and in their restlessness before political stalemate. It is parochialism and literal-mindedness, not aggressiveness, that underlies their present, seemingly dangerous thinking. The key to understanding the apparent militancy of much that Goldwater says lies in an appreciation of how profoundly apolitical he is, a facet of his thinking that should be clear from the persistence with which he has placed his controversial concept of extremism in a military or police context. Because of his distrust for the diplomatic bargaining table, he has taken to proposing a restoration of world order through placing a bigger cop with a bigger nightstick on America's global beat. It would all be so easy, he seems to be saying, if we simply labeled Communist powers the enemy and set to work policing the world with what he has taken to calling "conventional nuclear weapons."

One supporter at the convention said a good deal about Goldwater when he observed that he was "the most reassuring Republican since Calvin Coolidge." Surely, his passivity, his dislike of publicity, his obvious discomfort at the thought of employing the great power of the presidency and his general vagueness and indecisiveness are far more important features of his appeal than the secret intellectual ammunition that is being fed to him by the intellectual right, as I. F.

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Stone and others have been maintaining. It seems to me that there is very little substance to the apocalyptic vision that is being urged upon us of an America that is about to show its fascist colors under the charismatic leadership of a Goldwater, aided and abetted by the John Birch Society, the White Citizens Council and a power clique of frustrated Air Force generals. In contrast to McCarthy, whose insatiable longing for power and whose ruthlessness were seldom concealed, Goldwater seems an almost Chaplinesque figure who appears to inspire affection rather than awe in his followers. It is *sympatico* Barry rather than ideologue Barry who is now winning the hearts of Americans long frustrated in their desire for a politician they can both like and trust. Except for Eisenhower, the Republican party has done poorly by its followers in this respect. Frigid Tom Dewey, tricky Dick Nixon, a wooden and ascetic George Romney and Nelson Rockefeller with his glacial smile and his heartless wife-snatching have, none of them, inspired the kind of personal allegiance that Harry Truman, for example, did for Democrats in 1948. For Republicans and others who are now flocking to him, Barry Goldwater is a new political "flavor" expressly suited to the taste of a great many politically "unchurched" Americans.

One of the great imponderables in any calculation of how well Goldwater may do in November is the question of just who these Americans are. A few things, however, do seem fairly clear. Those most active in Goldwater's support are what are generally called "solid citizens": responsible, articulate, thoroughly presentable men and women. They differ from their Republican predecessors and Democratic counterparts in their youthfulness, their prosperousness and their newness to politics. This very affluent class of disaffected Americans represents the hundreds of thousands of so-called small or family businesses across the nation. These "small" businesses are actually very substantial and their assets, like those of the Goldwater stores, frequently run into the millions. To them the complex hierarchical world of the large corporations, the labor unions, the government bureaus and the national political parties have traditionally been a foreign territory which they have vaguely identified with "the East." The source of their disaffection lies in the very prosperity that they have recently been enjoying, and in their resentment that, wealthy and powerful as they are on the local scene, they are still forced to "heel" before the unions, the national corporations, the money marketeers of Wall Street and their minions in the Washington bureaucracy and on the national party committees. For them a return to States' Rights and "home rule" would

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amount to their own assumption of the political and financial direction of America's affairs.. They have made a success of their lives, one senses, at a comparatively youthful age, and they have settled with their families in the better suburbs of American cities. In their outlook, they appear to represent a new brand of well-heeled parochialism.

The problem is why this kind of man has responded to a Goldwater rather than, say, to a Scranton, a Romney or a Lodge. There are, it should be clear already, many things about Goldwater that appeal to this kind of man, who may be college-trained but is not really educated. He is semi-literate politically, intellectually defensive and, all in all, a man of the times rather than a *Times* man. Early success and family responsibilities have narrowed the focus of his concern. He is made anxious and distrustful in the face of social and technological change, both real and threatened, and he wishes above all else that he could "buy out" on the basis of the present market. Though he distrusts technology he, too, is enamoured of mechanical gimmicks and he finds Goldwater's hobbies of flying and ham radio operating appealing. Successful himself, he finds poverty and unemployment incomprehensible and his contact with hardship, it must be confessed, has been slight indeed—even visually. His contact with politics has led him to conclude that political parties represent some sort of conspiracy against him and others like him, engines of corruption that are largely self-perpetuating. At the same time, he has concluded that America is prosperous enough to provide him with a sense of security abroad and to end for all time the game of "give-away" that he associates with all previous administrations. Tired of being "pushed around," he is attracted by Goldwater's personal mildness as well as by his assurance that domestic and foreign affairs can be spruced up with comparative simplicity. He sees in him someone very like himself.

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BOOKS

THE TRIUMPH OF THE FACT

ABUNDANCE FOR WHAT? AND OTHER ESSAYS. By David Riesman. Doubleday. $6.50.

Sociology, one foot firmly planted on the grave of metaphysics, the other tentatively poised on the elevator leading to the summit of political power, is the master discipline of our time. Other ages may have done more for philosophy, literature, or art. Even the nineteenth century, if truth be told, was rather better at the business of intellectual synthesis. But none can dispute our pre-eminence when it comes to the social sciences. There is nothing in the past to match the devoted labors of those trained researchers who have taught us how to quantify, tabulate, and analyze our social environment: the people inhabiting it, the customs inspiring them, and the assumptions by which they live. It is true that the foundations were laid in an earlier and darker age: Comte, Marx, Durkheim, Pareto, and Weber toiled and wrought with simpler tools. But now that the scaffolding has been removed, the structure that shines forth is unmistakeably a skyscraper. Moreover, its spare lines bear witness that its architects are the peers of those builders in steel and glass who have created our modern cities. If the effect strikes a certain chill, it is undeniably impressive. Its beauty is of the hygienic sort, but it is beauty nonetheless.

The work of David Riesman takes its place within this collective composition, as a bridge or corridor, perhaps, guiding the student toward the inner recesses of pure theorizing. The reader's path is eased by the skill with which the author's style dissembles his learning, though there are footnotes on almost every page to remind one that mastery of complex subjects is not attained without hard work. Does the question concern the mental stress involved in migration from country to town? "Some Observations on Interviewing in a State Mental Hospital" will indicate the source material which has served as the

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basis for more far-reaching conclusions. Are shopping habits to be considered? A signpost to a learned paper (not the author's) on "Contributions to the Theory of Reference-Group Behavior" will refresh the mind, followed perhaps by a dip into "The Career of the Funeral Director" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1954). Is the theme under discussion connected with the career plans of Harvard students? A glance at "The Validation of Expressed Interests As Compared with Inventory Interests" (*Journal of Applied Psychology*, XXXIX, 1955, 184-89) will supply the desired information. Or is the researcher anxious to discover why some people prefer to live in one place rather than another? He will be directed to "Amenities as a Factor in Regional Growth" (*Geographic Review*, XLIV, 1954, 119). The wealth and precision of these footnote references is such that practically every generalization may be said to carry its burden of proof. "Three Centuries of Women's Dress Fashions: A Quantitative Analysis," by Jane Richardson and A. L. Kroeber (*Anthropological Record*, V, 1940, 112-50) is merely one out of literally hundreds of such casual allusions to source material.

To the envious reviewer, gently stewing in what Zelda Fitzgerald once called "the boiling oil of sour grapes" (this quotation is not from Riesman, I discovered it elsewhere), such a profusion of learning inevitably acts as a challenge. Thirty collected essays, six hundred pages of rigorously scientific, yet colloquially presented, information on very nearly every subject under the sun—who can blame the poor critic if he starts looking for flaws? Alas, wherever he turns he is met with the same firm, yet gentle and persuasive guidance to the ultimate authority: that of the fact. Whether the subject is international relations, social tensions, suburban life, or the motor car (there is an extremely learned discussion of Detroit's production and styling problems), the reader is discreetly steered through the maze of controversy to conclusions imposed by dispassionate reasoning and backed by mastery of the relevant literature. The conclusions may be unexciting, but they are never hasty; the mode of reasoning may derive from too uncritical an acceptance of the current empiricist orthodoxy, but all possible counter-arguments are considered in advance; the whole may give the impression of a tremendous accumulation of data devoted to the end of buttressing an evanescent faith in the mores of an enlightened middle class: but *this* criticism (like every other, from whatever point of the compass) is anticipated by the author and built into the structure of his argument. Marx, Freud, Weber, Veblen, the critics of "alienation," even the anarchists—they all get their due, and are duly

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consigned to rest beneath the tombstone of a learned apparatus which yet, surprisingly, does not interfere with the flow of an easy, sprightly, almost conversational, style. Who said sociology is dull? Riesman almost manages to make it entertaining.

In an ideal world, a writer who combines this breadth of information with an intelligent grasp of Keynesian economics, Freudian psychology, and the complexities of the arms race, would carry the kind of authority which is actually reserved for specialists in these various disciplines. Much of Riesman's work is in fact concerned with the need to establish connections between separated fields of study: specifically between behaviorist psychology, empirical sociology, and contemporary politics. He even ventures into Sovietology, at the risk of irritating the incumbents. I must confess there are times when I am uncertain what he is getting at. Consider a passage such as the following:

> More generally, I have long thought that we need to re-evaluate the role of corruption in a society, with less emphasis on its obviously malign features, and more on its power as an antidote to fanaticism. Barrington Moore in *Soviet Politics,* and Margaret Mead in *Soviet Attitudes Toward Authority,* present materials documenting the Soviet campaign against the corrupting tendencies introduced into the system by friendship and family feeling—some of Mead's quotations could have come from Bishop Baxter or other Puritan divines, and others from American civil service reformers. While Kravchenko shows how one must at once betray friends in the Soviet regime when they fall under State suspicion—and here too the Soviets are more tyrannous than the Nazis who expected friends to intercede with the Gestapo—it would appear that such human ties have never been completely fragmented, whether by Puritanism, industrialism, or their savagely sudden combination in Bolshevism. (p. 84.)

I am able to follow the general drift of the argument, but it does not seem to me to lead to any conclusions more sensational than the statement that human nature is pretty constant. Assuming this to be so (though in fact I don't believe it), how does it help one to understand what has been happening in the USSR? Riesman to the contrary, I remain obstinately convinced that the proper way to understand Bolshevism is to study Russian history; the way to understand Nazism is to study German history; the way to understand industrialism is to study economic history. There may be a common factor, but if there is, it escapes me. I suspect it also escapes Riesman, although

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he devotes a good deal of effort to the business of isolating it and fixing the label "totalitarianism" upon it. This seems to me a waste of time. The Puritans, incidentally, were not totalitarian, for the good and sufficient reason that their ideology did not compel them to undertake a thorough reshaping of the social whole: they contented themselves with the imposition of a new set of manners (or rather with the generalization of manners and customs already prevalent among their own followers). It is also worth remembering that Puritanism—or for that matter any other ideology—is a historical product. To say that Bolshevism "combines" "Puritanism" and "industrialism" is to abstract from the concrete historical background of all three. It is no doubt true that there was a puritanical streak in the character of the early Bolsheviks, and it is arguable that every industrial revolution is accompanied by an emphasis on hard work and sacrifice. But if we label this emphasis "puritanical," and then argue back from modern industrialism to seventeenth-century Calvinism, we are moving in a circle. The fact is that no one knows why the Industrial Revolution succeeded in some places and failed in others, though the fate of the Protestant Reformation in the various European countries supplies a clue to the answer. Lastly, it is just as well to bear in mind that prior to 1917 Russian industry was already expanding at a rate it has rarely exceeded since, and this without the benefit of a puritanical ideology, or any other.

The whole subject is full of puzzling complexities. The French Revolution, by promoting social equality, clearly hampered France's economic development, in so far as it slowed down capital accumulation; yet it also laid the base of a subsequent advance at a later stage, after the shock had worn off. This, incidentally, renders questionable the notion that the modernization of backward countries is best promoted by introducing egalitarian social reforms. A strong case can be made for the proposition that poor countries have to choose between equality and progress. If this is so, it is tantamount to saying that in such areas liberal democracy is unworkable. This conclusion can be grasped in the absence of further information about particular circumstances, the moral standards prevalent in the society, or any other feature of interest to cultural anthropologists. It is simply a consequence of the political set-up. Similarly, corruption "as an antidote to fanaticism" has existed since time immemorial. What renders its role important today is the part it plays in preventing backward countries from modernizing themselves. Corruption, by the way, can take numerous forms, some of them apparently legitimate. Bloated

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urban economies flourishing at the expense of an impoverished and neglected countryside, for example, tend to "corrupt" their trade unions by paying them high wages. Meanwhile the hinterland is left to rot until there is an explosion. Such symbiotic relationships are quite common in "underdeveloped" countries; as long as money doesn't change hands in ways that are stigmatized as illegal, the system looks stable and respectable. One is not sure how Riesman would categorize such a situation. I should call it "pre-revolutionary," on the assumption that eventually an armed minority is going to rebel. But this assumption is reasonable only because contemporary politics are what they are. In past ages, these people would have gone on passively enduring their lot, human nature notwithstanding. Human nature appears to be very largely what we make it.

I have perhaps devoted too much space to a subject that happens to be of topical concern. *Abundance for What?* is not really about the Cold War or the problem of "underdevelopment." As the title indicates, it is for the most part about what Galbraith some years ago described as the problem of "affluence." No doubt this problem is very real to some people. It must be, seeing that there is such a vast literature around it. Personally I don't find the problems of suburbanites, and the worries of consumers, very fascinating, but there are millions of them, and they are clearly entitled to the best professional attention they can get.

The more technical papers have been crammed into the second half of the volume. They include a thoughtful appraisal of Veblen, and the inevitable reconsideration of de Tocqueville. One sometimes wonders how many of his readers are aware that *Democracy in America* is much inferior to de Tocqueville's later work. Riesman takes him perhaps a shade more seriously than he deserves. The remaining essays include one on the technique of interviewing: a practice that has clearly been brought to a fine art, since it has now become possible to make it the subject of theoretical considerations. (The title of this paper is "The Sociology of the Interview.") It had not previously occurred to me that the political views and voting habits of middle-class women can be analyzed with the same degree of precision as the incomes of their men, but apparently it can be done. (See James G. March, "Husband-Wife Interaction over Political Issues," *Public Opinion Quarterly,* XVII, 4, [Winter 1953-4], pp. 461-70.) If a general impression emerges from these papers dealing with the worries of the educated middle-class, it is that their author is in close *rapport* with the state of mind manifested by those interviewees who

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profess themselves faintly puzzled by the current state of the world, though willing to keep an open mind about it. Both sides to the dialogue seem to embody the same uncertainties, combined with a resolve to go on searching for an answer. This is apparently to be done by accumulating yet more data on the voting preferences of middle-aged housewives, the "scale of tolerance" manifested by college-educated (as distinct from non-college-educated) respondents, and the extent to which people are "worried more or less now than they used to be, and what about." Here at any rate is something de Tocqueville had not thought of, but then serious research has come of age only with the invention of the questionnaire.

George Lichtheim

THEORY AND PRACTICE

ONE-DIMENSIONAL MAN: STUDIES IN THE IDEOLOGY OF ADVANCED INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY. By Herbert Marcuse. Beacon Press. $6.00.

One Friday evening a few years ago, I was standing in the midst of a noisy, happy crowd of students in an auditorium at Brandeis, waiting for a concert to begin, when word suddenly came up the line: "Marcuse's here!" At once there was a hush, and people divided themselves up to clear a path. A tall, erect, vividly forceful man passed down the aisle, smiling here and there to friends, radiant yet curiously aloof, rather like an aristocrat who was a popular hero as well, perhaps Egmont in the streets of Brussels. The students held their breaths and gazed at him with awe. After he had got to his seat they relaxed again, flux and chaos returned, but only for a moment, till everyone could find his place; it was as if Marcuse's very presence had given a structure to events.

At the time I was puzzled: I knew Marcuse only as an historian of philosophy, preeminent in the study of Hegel and Marx, radical in his inclinations, yet technical and esoteric almost to the point of inaccessibility. But since then, in wrestling with his more recent work, I've come to understand that demonstration. What makes Marcuse so attractive a figure to many young radicals is precisely that he *does* give structure to events—at least, to most of the events that matter most to them. I should say, for sincerity's sake: to *us*. Where we, and the men

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we most admire, feel radical impulses, think radical thoughts, make radical gestures, strike radical poses, adopt radical attitudes, propose radical solutions, Marcuse, almost alone in the English-speaking world, has radical *Ideas*. Radicalism in America has never been long on Ideas—anyway, not since the time of Jefferson, which is time out of mind. It has been polarized between moral protest (usually impotent) and interest-group machination (compromising when successful). As for traditional Marxism, historically the most impressive attempt to bridge the gap, in the American climate it has grown almost entirely in narrow and vulgar forms, and has justly come to nothing. Moreover, the History of Ideas, as taught in American universities, has tended (with a few notable exceptions) to have a conservative influence, buttressing the great, continuous Basic Values of Western Civilization against the "nihilistic" attacks they have suffered in the past hundred years. Marcuse, however, has tried to give our spontaneous, impulsive protests an intellectual status, to connect our concrete complaints with world-historical developments. To be radical, young Marx pointed out, means, after all, to get to the root of things; it has been Marcuse's heroic enterprise to pursue the roots of radicalism itself into the very Ground of Being. For this he deserves all our thanks and admiration, but also the most intense critical scrutiny we can give.

One-Dimensional Man describes and analyzes a regimented, standardized, conformist "totalitarianism" which is coming more and more to pervade advanced industrial societies, East and West alike. In itself this is an old story, a staple of modern social criticism, whether conservatively or anarchistically inspired. But Marcuse is not too worried about either a populist "tyranny of the majority" or a brutally repressive police state; both of these, he thinks, are passing phases, mostly past, in our evolution. The specter that haunts him is a totalitarianism that is benevolent rather than repressive, embraced joyously by the people rather than imposed by force, built on the lines of the *Brave New World* rather than those of *1984*. Sometimes Marcuse speaks as if there were a military-industrial Power Elite behind it all; though he is never very explicit as to who these sinister interests (the "interests of domination," as he puts it) are, or how they operate. At other times he alludes to a "web of domination" in which everybody, from top to bottom, is fatally entangled: "The world tends to become the stuff of total administration, which absorbs even the administrators themselves." The source of this total power is not made any easier to locate by Marcuse's adaptation of the later Sartre's notion of an "historical project," which obscures just those problems of individual freedom and responsibility on which the early Sartre shed so much light. ("As

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the project of advanced industrial society unfolds, it shapes the entire universe of discourse and action, intellectual and material culture. In the medium of technology, culture, politics and the economy merge into an omnipresent system which swallows up or repulses all alternatives.") However, Marcuse is not interested so much in causes as in effects. "The political needs of society become individual needs and aspirations, their satisfaction promotes business and commonwealth, and the whole appears as the very embodiment of Reason." His thoughts on the future are equivocal, yet unequivocally and deeply pessimistic: he is afraid that this too easy dissolution of individual conscience in National Purpose may, in the context of the Cold War, help blow up the world; yet he is also afraid that it may not—that the competing totalitarians may reconcile their differences and peaceably carve the world up instead. (This double pessimism is foreshadowed in one of the great but neglected works in the history of Marxism, Rudolf Hilferding's *Das Finanzkapital* [1910]. The ebbs and flows of optimism and pessimism within the Marxist tradition would make a fascinating study in the history of ideas.) It is this latter possibility, with its disastrous implications for individuality and freedom, that *One-Dimensional Man* is really about.

Marcuse tries to explain advanced industrial society as a smoothly functioning system in which every aspect of life reinforces the others, an infernal machine in which all parts mesh together perfectly to grind the spirit down. To make this sort of indictment stick, he has to work it out at every level of social life: the language, truth and logic "of domination" must be echoed by philosophers and plumbers, artists and admen alike. This is quite a job, and one which I am sure he would never have dreamt of undertaking until a few years ago. But like Marx, one of his heroes, Marcuse has become more concrete with advancing age, more involved than ever in the socio-pathology of everyday life. Still, he is not accustomed to its dark and twisted ways. As a result, the tone of the book lurches from the metaphysical to the journalistic, from high seriousness to heavy sarcasm, moralistic indignation, and a complex and elusive irony, shifting gears with a jarring abruptness. Nevertheless, Marcuse can operate at all these levels with force and mastery, if not with ease. And if this is not an easy book, he could argue, as Kierkegaard did, that much of the trouble with this age stems from too many people trying to make life too easy, and that it might be fruitful for a change to try and make at least the intellectual life hard.

The first principle by which Marcuse judges all forms of life is the Hegelian-Marxist axiom that strife (read: "contradiction") is

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the father of all great things. The basic trouble with American society today, he thinks, is that there aren't enough contradictions in it. "Technical progress, extended to a whole system of domination and coordination, creates forms of life (and of power) which appear to reconcile the forces opposing the system. . . . An overriding interest in the preservation and improvement of the status quo unites the former antagonists." The air no longer rings with calls for "qualitative changes." Of course Marcuse is thinking mainly of Labor *vs.* Capital here; and he has some excellent pages on how organized labor in America has learned to live with, often to love, some of the seamiest sides of capitalism. (One important case Marcuse does not mention: the arrangements which many old and powerful unions have made with management for a limited number of jobs at high wages, while leaving the technologically displaced, the unorganized, the chronically unemployed to statistics and the beadle.) It is easy to detect beneath this lament a deep strain of revolutionary romanticism, a nostalgia for the barricades; and one's first response may be exasperation—haven't we had enough of all *that* in this bloody century? But Marcuse's real point transcends his sentimentalism. He is concerned to bring out the *latent* functions (to use yet another jargon) of revolutionary thought. Demands for "total" and "qualitative" change in a social system furnish a total *perspective* from which the system can be clearly seen and judged. Without the revolutionary perspective, not even meaningful reforms can be made, because the most glaring disparities will be taken for granted as part of the way things are. But the value of revolutionary thought goes beyond social utility: it is essential if the very traditional values of freedom and individuality are to be fulfilled. Only through such a medium can men free themselves from their prejudices, transcend their past and immediate interests, arrive at evaluations and choices that will be authentically "their own." In creating some distance between the individual and his society, radical criticism gives him room to move and to grow.

It is this distance, this vital alienation, that Marcuse feels we have lost.

> In the absence of demonstrable agents and agencies of social change, the critique is thus thrown back on a high level of abstraction. There is no ground on which theory and practice, thought and action, can meet. . . . Confronted with the total character of the achievements of advanced industrial society, critical theory is left without a rationale for transcending this society. This vacuum empties the theoretical structure itself.

The most original parts of the book try to reveal this emptiness

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through an analysis of the languages we have come to speak. In "ordinary language," to start with, we tend more and more to "identify the thing with its function"—all too often, a function which sinister interests have arranged it to serve. We allow the meanings of words to be determined by the situation in which they are used; we raise no general questions beyond the immediate context as to the *propriety* of these words in this situation. In view of the vast store of unconscious associations which all words have in our minds, this abdication of the critical sense leaves us open to monstrous manipulation. Thus, for instance, we speak of the "clean bomb," and of "games" which depict the murder of hundreds of millions of people, with diminishing awareness of the contradictions and ironies involved. (Marcuse has a better case with "games": even outside the sheltered life of the RAND corporation, they appear to be gradually losing their quotation marks, and taking their place in the structure of everyday experience. Other examples would probably not be too hard to find.) Sometimes Marcuse exhibits a foreigner's charming sensitivity to the nuances of spoken English. In discussing automation, he quotes a worker who at first felt ill at ease with the new machines; by and by, however, he came around, and said: "All in all we are in the swing of things." Marcuse pounces on this phrase with delight. It "admirably expresses the change in mechanized enslavement: things swing rather than oppress; and they swing the human instrument—not only its body, but also its mind and even its soul." He then elaborates this concept of "swinging" with a brief discussion of the passive erotic fantasies to which workers at automated machines are prone, and the "functional" character these fantasies have in keeping them going. (This adds evidence for another of Marcuse's most interesting theories, too complex to discuss here: that the partial sexual emancipation we have seen in the last fifty years has actually, "dialectically," served to reinforce a more general repressiveness.) Such lively observations show Marcuse at his best, as he unearths some universal alienation in a concrete event. It is too bad he doesn't let himself go in this way more often.

We could wish for more concreteness, too, in his splendidly suggestive discussion of the language of art. The great triumphs of nineteenth-century literature, he argues, stem from its power to seize and to evoke the most urgent social conflicts of the age. This success could be built only on a rich store of "negative and oppositional concepts" in the general consciousness. "The category 'society' itself expressed the acute conflict between the social and political spheres—society as antagonistic to the state. Similarly, 'individual,' 'class,' 'private,' 'family' denoted spheres and forces not yet integrated with the established

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conditions [of production]." Today, however, ". . . with the growing integration of industrial society, these categories are losing their critical connotation, and tend to become merely descriptive, deceptive or operational." This helps explain the abstract and parabolic style of so much of the best modern literature, as well as its underlying pessimism. In a society without tension and contradiction, men are deprived of any medium in which to work out identities for themselves; personality becomes accessible only in the labyrinth of psychic inwardness, or in some sort of symbolic Beyond (Beckett's urns)—or gets thrown out entirely, in the French manner, as a stale anachronism. (Lukács, Goldmann and Adorno are not mentioned here, but their influence is plain. Marxism may yet make its deepest and most lasting mark in the sociology of art, which only now is beginning to come into its own.)

Recent philosophy in the English-speaking world, Marcuse thinks, has only rationalized these trends. The heart of the book is an elaborate critique of "linguistic analysis," which, spreading its fog from Oxford among the nations, has tended to suffocate critical thought at birth. The real villain here, though he only occasionally emerges from the wings, is Wittgenstein, whose later theory of meaning, developed in the *Philosophical Investigations,* identifies the meaning of a word with its use in a particular social context; every word is a piece, every expression a move, in a "language-game." Such an approach, according to Marcuse, is conservative in the profoundest sense: it has no standard of validity beyond sheer brute existence, and leaves every established mode of discourse just as it is. Certain difficulties seem to arise, however, when, as Marcuse points out, the "ordinary" world "is still that of the gas chambers and concentration camps, of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, . . . of the nuclear cities and the Chinese communes, . . . of brainwashing and massacres." "Ordinary language" may depict the smiling bridegroom as free. It tells us nothing about that other representative man, the smiling bureaucrat in charge of Transport. In addition, "ordinary language" is full of euphemism and contradiction. When a theory makes it impossible to ask, "Is that Bomb *really* clean?" or "By 'pacification' don't you actually mean 'murder'?", then it is time for a new theory. "Syntax, grammar and vocabulary are moral and political acts. . . . If linguistic behavior . . . surrenders to the immediate facts, it repels recognition of the factors behind the facts, and thus repels [genuine] recognition of the facts themselves, and of their historical content. . . . [This] suppression of history is not an academic but a political affair." Marcuse wants the analysis of language to become historical and critical, so that it can penetrate the facade of tranquillity, and discover the embarrassing and often terrifying facts

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which the speakers and idolaters of "ordinary language" try to repress.

Such a critique is reasonable enough; but Marcuse's peculiar way of making it exposes some of his most serious limitations. Throughout the book he equates this functionalist relativism, this cult of ordinary language, with the "radical empiricist onslaught" of logical positivism. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. The whole élan of logical positivism lay in its brutally rigorous exposé of the hidden prejudices, fallacies and contradictions in all current modes of thought, in "ordinary language" most of all. Its moving spirits—Carnap, Schlick, Neurath, Ayer—were deeply radical, politically as well as philosophically: in limiting meaningful discourse to what could be verified empirically, in rigidly distinguishing value judgments from statements of fact, in trying to develop a logically perfect language, they hoped to prevent obfuscation and manipulation forever—to keep a spade from being called anything but a spade, or murder from being disguised as pacification. The cult of ordinary language arose after the Second World War out of an explicit and extreme reaction to the program of logical positivism. The positivists had tended toward a crude, iconoclastic reductionism that threw out established forms of discourse far too facilely (see the first edition of *Language, Truth and Logic*—and the adjustments Ayer later made); ordinary-language analysis, in the name of "the complexity of actual language," restored everything exactly as it was, with no questions asked—except about the questioners themselves. The program Marcuse puts forth calls for

> analyzing ordinary language in really controversial areas, recognizing muddled thinking where it *seems* to be least muddled, uncovering the falsehood in so much normal and "clear" usage. Then linguistic analysis would attain the level on which the specific social processes which shape and limit the universe of discourse become visible and understandable.

Now what he wants here is actually a synthesis that will fuse the critical rigor and vigor of the positivists with the phenomenological subtlety of the linguistic analysts. If he were consistent in his Hegelianism, he would develop his program as the logical fulfillment of the promises of both. Indeed, several philosophers in the analytic tradition have recently been coming around on their own to just this sort of view. But by lumping these two schools of thought together—as continental thinkers often do, raising snobbism to the level of ideology—Marcuse misses the dialectical relation between them, and so neglects the vast potentialities they present for critical thought. If he looked more closely at what his fellow-philosophers were actually doing, another

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dimension might open up to him, and prospects might appear a bit less bleak.

This last complaint is more than marginal. Marcuse seems to take a perverse pride in his isolation—indeed, this pride is the dominant personal note in a book where personality is mostly effaced—and carries it to gratuitous extremes. For instance, in a long, tortuous, esoteric argument, full of jargon, repeated in several forms, he insists that without a belief in the reality of universals, critical thought can get nowhere. The only alternative to universal concepts, for him, is the closed Newspeak which the sinister interests want to spread. The empiricist demand for concrete reference and verification plays into the hands of those who arrange the concrete world to which words must refer. Thus the dominant American tradition of nominalism and empiricism in social science is unalterably corrupt. Marcuse cites a sociological study of workers' discontent in which social scientists working for management tried to reduce all *malaise* to specific, individual grievances that could be adjusted individually while leaving the system intact. Some workers complained, for example, that "wages are too low." Marcuse comments:

> The proposition is abstract. It refers to universal conditions for which no particular case can be substituted. . . . The concept "wages" refers to the group "wage-earners," integrating all personal histories and special jobs into one concrete universal.

Wages, in other words, *by definition*, must *always* be "too low": the worker is actually raising questions about the wage-*system* as a whole, questions that are potentially revolutionary. In the hands of the villainous (or helpless?) empiricists in management's pay, however,

> The universal concept "wages" is replaced by "B.'s present earnings," the meaning of which is fully defined by the particular set of operations B. has to perform in order to buy for his family food, clothing, lodging, medicine, etc. . . . the grouping "wage-earners" has disappeared along with the subject "wages"; what remains is a particular case which . . . becomes susceptible to the accepted standards of treatment by a company whose case it is.

Now all this is ingenious, but misleading. Marcuse thinks that to make protest concretely "empirical" necessarily strips it of its force; but this simply isn't so. Certainly, from the viewpoint of a social scientist committed to management's interests, the worker's complaint *may* be "cashed" (to use William James's term) this way; and indeed, for any

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given worker, the company *may* happen to be right. But it is equally possible to cash it in a radical way, to feel that: "Being a wage-earner is unmanly, an insult to one's dignity, and that one would get out of it if he could support himself on his own." As a matter of fact, Eli Chinoy's very empirical studies of automobile workers have shown that a great many resent "the system" for just this reason, and remain in it largely because they can see no viable way out. Empiricism, it appears, can cut just as sharply against the grain.

Marcuse's view of empiricism may be so constricted because there is a whole complementary dimension of experience which he doesn't see at all: the moral life. Fruitful social criticism for him seems limited to the Marxist dialectic which seeks to "recognize and seize the liberating potentialities" hidden in an oppressive social system. Now this may be fine as a paradigm for orthodox labor and socialist criticism in highly developed, thoroughly liberalized societies, if there are or ever were such things. ("The workers," Marx said, "have no ideals to realize, but to set free the elements of the new society with which old, collapsing bourgeois society is pregnant.") But it doesn't account for the young people who are risking their lives in Mississippi and elsewhere today because they *won't* live in a society shot through with racial and economic exploitation. Their protest has little to do with any estimate of the "liberating potentialities" in the American system; it springs from a flat refusal to stand any longer for systematic injustice. They have no head for metaphysics, their style is brusquely empirical, but their temper is deeply moral. Their ideals are old, traditional: independence, dignity, self-respect, the life of "free men"—not so very different from what Jefferson had in mind. Yet although they are not interested in dialectical thought about America's latent potential, their very actions are proof that such potential exists: in a society that has betrayed the revolution it was based on, nothing could be more radical than a revival of old morality—it is the return of the repressed.

Yet to put down Marcuse's book and pick up the morning paper, the reader might think he were in a different world. The conflicts that are stretching American society to the breaking (or remaking) point find not even an echo in his pages. It is hard to see why. Surely Waltham isn't *that* far out. Surely, as many brilliant vignettes testify, he reads the newspapers as carefully as anybody; though he is probably more reluctant than most of us to believe them. Still, when he laments the inefficacy of "the feeble and ridiculed actions of protest and refusal," we can't help wondering where he's been lately. In a sense this book belongs less to the sixties than to the fifties, when it was generally felt that our "affluent society" had solved all the great social problems

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and resolved all the contradictions which had been plaguing men for centuries, and when the one thing needful seemed to be to preserve islands of individual dissonance amid the dissolving waves of harmony. All sorts of monistic theories were worked out—a few of them brilliantly, like this one—to account for the deadly monistic world we were supposed to have become. But these autopsies turned out to have been premature. Our rigidities weren't nearly so well integrated as we had thought. There were new dimensions, new contradictions, new life in the old system yet.

Maybe, in time, these contradictions too will be worked out somehow, and the nightmare Marcuse projects today will come true tomorrow. The long-range trends he sees are powerful and dangerous enough; and his totalistic perspective has proved fruitful indeed in pointing them out so clearly. It would certainly be naive to be optimistic about the future of radicalism in America. Not nearly enough is being done; and the élan may well peter out, as it petered out a generation ago, before very much actually *is* done. Yet meanwhile, more is being thought and talked about and tried today than at any time since many of us learned to read. If Marcuse's "critical theory of society possesses no concepts which could bridge the gap between the present and the future," so that "holding no promise and showing no success, it remains negative," it is only because he won't look around him, or take notice of the din in all our ears. There are enough critical concepts, lost causes, "missed revolutions" (as Paul Goodman aptly puts it) in the air—needing only, in this climate, to be fused with the radical energy which lately has been so disturbing to our peace—to explode "the system," for better or worse, ten times over. It is true that these concepts are generally rough and unsystematic, lack the grandeur and symmetry of the idea of "one-dimensional man," indeed, lack the status of Ideas altogether. Still, for now, this may not be altogether a bad thing. "The Germans are certainly strange people," said Goethe to Eckermann. "By their profound thoughts and ideas, which they seek everywhere and fix on everything, they burden their lives much more than is necessary." There are times when even the best Ideas serve only as a dead weight, and when letting them go will give the spirit new life.

Marshall Berman

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HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS: A CRITICAL EXAMINATION. By James J. Lynch and Bertrand Evans. Atlantic-Little Brown. $4.95.

The Council for Basic Education, which is the sponsor of this volume, is well known for its efforts to point out the weaknesses in the American school system. In this work its authors turn their attention to the two types of textbooks, the anthologies, and grammar and composition series, which are widely used in secondary school English courses.

If the teaching of English in our schools is as weak as the authors seem to believe, then they have pointed out on page xiv one of the obvious reasons for this: "the textbook is literally the course." I have no way of questioning the truth of this finding, but it is at least noteworthy that the authors, having pointed this out, never refer to it

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again. Surely it is obvious that if this is true those who would improve instruction are licked from the start and that no amount of tinkering with anthologies is going to change the situation. In that case, should we not explore this matter right away, instead of occupying ourselves with a study that assumes this situation is going to persist? Are the teachers just plain incompetent? Are the classes too large? Is there no school library, or is it poorly assembled?

In other words, I would suggest to the authors of this work, that if they could assume that the anthology would be used by a competent teacher who would consider it along with other materials as an aid to the teaching of English, a lot of their problems, and also of the anthologists', would disappear. To require publishers to come up with textbooks which will "literally" teach the course is to demand the impossible.

However, it is clear that even if the anthology were simply a teaching aid, our authors would have criticisms to make of much of the content of the books under study. For example, they find a disturbing trend towards the inclusion of more and more material by twentieth-century authors. But unless such material is ruled out by the very fact of its having been written since 1900, then surely, as this century wears on, there is a good chance that there will be some increase in the amount of modern writing suitable for adoption alongside work from earlier centuries. The authors spend a good deal of time pointing out that what the writer should do is to convey ideas. Are we then supposed to put these two theses together and argue that there have been few ideas in the twentieth century worth writing about or worth studying in the form in which they have been written?

One could well argue that much contemporary thinking about the world would have been impossible had it not been for the development of a new logic by such authors as Whitehead and Russell. What these logicians did was to dethrone the Aristotelian analysis with its emphasis on the subject-predicate form of statement. In subtle ways this had an effect on forms in art and music as well as in literature, and precisely because of the huge difficulties in learning how to manage these forms, much contemporary literature sounds barbaric to those whose sensibility is stuck in the past. Messrs. Lynch and Evans apparently want to be sure that our high school students shall develop a sense for the English language which will keep them forever at odds with the new notions about the nature of the world and of man.

Perhaps the most important point of the book is the insistence that the purpose of English courses is to teach literature, just as history courses teach history, and that everything admitted to an anthology

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shall be there only because of its literary merit. This is plausible enough. But what do they mean by literary merit or quality?

The "potency" of literature, they say, "derives from both its rational and its irrational components, including an indefinable one called 'art'." This is a rather vague definition. And though the theory that art is indefinable has its defenders, a flat statement of this sort, in a book where so much rests on a clear understanding of what is meant by literary quality, lets us down completely. Apparently all one can do is to define literature ostensively, and this our authors make a stab at by giving us lists of writers who might be included in a satisfactory anthology. However, we are left with an uncomfortable feeling that they do have certain unexpressed criteria which determine their choices, and that if these were brought out, they would probably resemble those by which tired old lists of "great books" are made up.

One curious consequence of this conception of what it is to be literary is that our authors deplore the repeated suggestions to students that, in learning the art of writing, they practice by writing about their own experiences. This, it seems, is a form of narcissism. The prohibition will surprise readers of many of the authors on the approved lists as well as many who, unhappy with the notion of art as simply indefinable, are struggling with a possible theory of art as expression. While one must admit that many of the topics suggested are phrased in what approximates baby-talk, still there seems to be no justification for letting the pendulum swing to the opposite extreme, where we "led David call Bob's mother not to find out what Bob is doing, but to find out how Bob interprets the conduct of Brutus in his quarrel with Cassius." This kind of preciousness would have been incomprehensible to both Brutus and Cassius. Ironically, Messrs. Lynch and Evans seem to have ignored their own prohibition. Under the guise of an objective study of high school textbooks, they have presented us with a theory of what should be taught and what should not, with no defense of their own prejudices or definition of their criteria. They have picked away at some of the more obvious weaknesses of present teaching materials without grasping the main point, which is that when textbooks are used as a substitute for teaching, they must always stumble and fall. What emerges from this study is a kind of literary never-never-land, where the English language would be used primarily for the purpose of discussing what other people have written. It never seems to occur to its authors that if this were all that English writers ever did, there would be little material left worth discussing.

Mason W. Gross

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CRITICS AND CRITICS

UNLUCKY J. I. M.

EIGHT MODERN WRITERS. By J. I. M. Stewart. Oxford University Press. $11.00.

Unlike the literary critic, who deals largely in living opinions, the literary historian is condemned to facts. But what, other than biographical and bibliographical data, are the facts of literary history? Solidified opinions: opinions that have achieved the permanence, definiteness, and respectability of marble, but also its ponderousness. The literary historian of the past runs the risk of too readily accepting the inertness of his matter and becoming academic, or unduly rebelling against it and becoming eccentric. Yet these are small hazards compared to those of the historian of the present, who is obliged to sculpture in flesh, or, to change the image, build inverted binoculars into his eyes—for there must be distancing, however artificial.

In writing the concluding volume of the *Oxford History of English Literature,* J. I. M. Stewart has tried to lick his problem by refusing to some extent the role of historian and partly espousing that of critic: a volume entitled *Eight Modern Writers* obviously departs from what was originally announced as *Modern Literature.* By the very act of exclusion, Professor Stewart becomes a critic rather than a historian. Or does he? Let us consider what Stewart's omissions imply—besides, of course, less work for him.

He tells us, first, that he excluded living writers—hence no Pound, Eliot, Auden, and none of the great recent dead—an act conformable neither to good critical judgment nor to sound historical practice. If one is going to worry about Stewart's "mists of near-contemporaneity," one might as well omit Yeats and Joyce and Lawrence. The inclusion of writers of "unchallengeable importance" only, though congruous with certain notions of literary history, is scarcely more commendable than its opposite, which, alas, also exists: we remember the *normaliens,* Lanson and Mornet, who, considering minor works more representative of a period than major ones, ended up weltering in mediocrities. Mr. Stewart contends that what he modestly "attempted is a volume that may serve

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as a companion to a first fairly extensive reading" in the "important literary landmarks." This begins to sound like neither criticism nor history, but a Hymarx Outline, perhaps elevated to the level of Hiermarx. Indeed, as we read *Eight Modern Writers,* we do not find Mr. Stewart's self-depreciation unjustified. Which does, however, raise the question of whether such a "companion" belongs in the twelve-volume *Oxford History,* even granted George Watson's remark (in *The Literary Critics*) that the series, though begun as recently as 1945, has "on the whole, an exhausted air."

If I insist on the distinction between criticism and literary history, it is because Professor Stewart's idiosyncrasies would have harmonized better with the former. Still, his choice of the major writers between 1880 and 1940 is correct by his standards, and no one would quarrel with the inclusion of Hardy, James, Shaw, Conrad, Yeats, Joyce, and Lawrence. But one could raise doubts about Kipling, particularly when allotted 71 pages, whereas Joyce and Shaw get 62 each, Hardy 52, James 51, and Conrad must make do with 39. (One almost suspects xenophobia, for the Polishness of Conrad is repeatedly, and not always relevantly, insisted upon.) Kipling, whom Wilde pronounced "our greatest authority on the second-rate," is, in Robert Graves's ironic phrase, "no more to be argued away than the design on the postage stamp," but neither is he to be argued into being a major artist as easily as Mr. Stewart thinks.

But Stewart is a great asserter. Yeats he declares "the first among the European poets of his age," which hoists him a bit too glibly above Rilke and Valéry. "Lawrence," we are told, "saw things very clearly. It is this more than anything else that gives him his preeminence among the writers discussed," which, in turn, places him above all three of the aforementioned. The remark is all the more questionable as Stewart clearly traces Lawrence's uncertainties, ambivalences, contradictions, and tergiversations, which would suggest that whatever the source of Lawrence's greatness may be, seeing clearly is not it. Again, we are informed that when his literary agent assigned to Kipling the mantle of Milton, "there was not too much hyperbole in the claim." Not too much, just enough. Stewart even provides us with a useful yardstick: "A preserved admiration for [*Saint Joan*] amid the changed literary fashions of the mid-twentieth century may fairly be set, along with a similarly preserved admiration for the poetry and prose of Hardy and the short stories of Kipling, among the touchstones of a good and catholic literary taste."

In more specific matters, we get equally quaint judgements. Thus

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the three last lines of "Ribh at the Tomb of Baile and Aillinn" are "almost in themselves an answer to the charge that [Yeats's] poetic craft is failing him in his last years." Note, first, that "almost," one of a group of prudential terms Stewart works as hard as the later Eliot used to. Secondly, against whom is this defense needed? Who ever said Yeats declined in his last poems? Most importantly, what is so extraordinary about the lines: "Though somewhat broken by the leaves, that light / Lies in a circle on the grass; therein / I turn the pages of my holy book"? What is extraordinary is to learn that "Three Things" is "perhaps" Yeats's best poem, and then find no mention of the two lyrics adjoining it in the *Collected Poems,* "After Long Silence" and "Lullaby," which are immeasurably superior. That forbiddingly private poem, "On a Picture of a Black Centaur" is "delightful"; though Yeats's drama is slight, *Cathleen ni Houlihan* is "a small masterpiece" on page 327, and *Purgatory* is "a small masterpiece" on page 405.

Perhaps these verdicts will seem less peculiar in the light of Professor Stewart's textual explications which, on rare occasions, he ventures into. So, when he analyzes the "Sinbad the Sailor" passage from *Ulysses,* "Xinbad the Phthailer" means to him no more than "the point at which the conscious mind gives up altogether"; yet Joyce clearly uses Bloom's somnolent mind as a verbal time machine to transport us back to Greece (Xin-, i.e., Xen-) and, farther back, to Egypt (Phtha-). Nor can Stewart extract much meaning from "Darkinbad the Brightdayler." Even simpler things escape him. He quotes at length Father Keegan's diatribe against the world as hell from *John Bull's Other Island,* and includes Broadbent's reply that some of these evils occur mainly when the Tories are in office. Stewart notes that we are here "being taken outside the boundaries of comedy" and have a "jarring sense" at "Broadbent's anticlimactic invoking of the Tories." This is worse than failure to appreciate a comic anticlimax; it makes one question Mr. Stewart's very concept of comedy.

When Sir Thomas Browne wrote his son Edward, "Pray bee mindfull to order your speech distinctly and leasurably, and not after that precipitous way of France," he might have set down this somewhat Polonian precept for the benefit of English criticism, whose mainstream has ever since proceeded distinctly and leisurably, joining neatness and urbanity to a thoroughly dignified pace. Mr. Stewart is no exception as he takes us step by step, in chronological order, through the major works of each writer, now and then discreetly alluding to a biographical fact, or pronouncing a usually guarded judgement, or indulging in a carefully balanced antithesis or parallel between writers. What this adds

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up to is plot summaries with a little critical seasoning; but since blatant synopses are pedestrian affairs, we tend to get somewhat oblique and foreshortened ones, making *Eight Modern Writers* not quite so good a sophomore English trot as it might have been.

The style is often charming, suffused with pleasant imagery and wit. When James writes about New York, "he has an assured command of his social scene, whereas in the international novels we have a constant sense of characters conspiring with their creator to keep up a high style, like women on the walls of a Royal Academy exhibition, anxiously holding poses of unaccustomed stateliness and grace." Or: "William Butler Yeats was one day to celebrate in verse a Butler who had borne arms at the Boyne. But he was unfortunately under a misapprehension as to which side this forebear had fought on, making necessary not the least curious of the innumerable revisions of his work." But the leisureliness can bog down into stagnancy, as in this comment on *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*:

> The regardlessness of the universe towards that which has tragically come to consciousness within it is now seen as miniatured in the regardlessness of society towards the individual.

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> Men collectively and for their material ease have decreed ordinances against which they see with complacency individuals break themselves and bleed; and to these ordinances they have baselessly ascribed supernatural sanction—so that Tess, carrying her illegitimate child among scenes declaring the naturalness of procreation, must yet be burdened by a conviction that she has transgressed more than a man-made law.

How welcome a little French precipitousness would be amid all this inversion, deliberateness, circumlocution, and sesquipedality. Mr. Stewart is prone to word order like "farcical anachronisms could no farther go," awkwardnesses like "less wholly undesirable," pleonasms like "but nevertheless" or "speculative thinker," and even catachreses like "wracks" for "racks" or "anxious" for "eager." Solecisms are not infrequent, and we get sentences as recalcitrant as, "Among the things he is incapable of resenting we must number the finding himself amid such a crush of persons framed entirely for our amusement." Once we are treated even to as unintentionally suggestive an ambiguity as a reference to Edward Marsh's *Georgian Poetry,* which gathered "smallish writers . . . conveniently into faggots." A favorite word of Stewart's like "pervasive" (or "pervade") appears no less than eight times between pages 205 and 222, and much sport may be had chasing this, or another favorite couple, "implicate" and "implication," clear across the 593 pages of the book.

But there are more serious troubles. Stewart maintains a double standard: the writers he prefers are excused for what the others are chided. Authors are excluded from the book for ignoring the challenge of the age or meeting it inadequately; yet the excuses produced for Kipling's chauvinism, colonialism, and Victorianism are worthy of the doting mother of a spoiled brat. James is castigated for his inability to make up his mind about people and systems, which in Lawrence is viewed rather more kindly: "a great artist has the right to disturb us." If Joyce, however, disturbs us, there are dark hints about his losing battle with insanity. Stewart displays, moreover, a nagging ambivalence about each writer: James has a splendid style and perception, but need he be so concerned with social niceties? Must Conrad, for all his vividness, be so haunted and driven? Why should Hardy's novels be Pandora's boxes when Dickens' can be Christmas hampers? Although, as we are hastily assured, there is a wonderful unity in Hardy's work.

More disturbing yet are the invidious comparisons between writers which ostensibly establish relationships but actually permit Stewart to upgrade his favorites and downgrade the less fortunate. Thus we are

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apprised that "*Women in Love* has perhaps a better claim than either *Ulysses* or *Finnegans' Wake* to be the radically original English novel of its age"; that "the ten lines of [Yeats's] 'The Chambermaid's First Song' achieve as full a statement as do the concluding 20,000 words of Joyce's *Ulysses*"; that Kipling, "to a landsman, at least," was at one fell swoop able to achieve the ability to write about the sea that Conrad painstakingly evolved, and to do it "with an impetus and verve such as Conrad seldom achieves." It is further suggested that, confronted with quintessential evil, Graham Greene is more effectual than either Conrad or James. And we learn that Kipling's "The Last Rhyme of True Thomas" is "quite as good a ballad as W. B. Yeats's *The King's Threshold* is a poetic drama," which, assuming that blimps and helicopters could be compared, is rather like comparing the best of the former with the most antiquated of the latter to the immortal glory of blimpdom.

We need not dwell on Stewart's carelessnesses, as when he refers to Villiers, which is the correct short form, as "de L'Isle-Adam" (the incorrectness compounded by the capital L), or when he is fooled by the title of Mallarmé's highly formal poem, "Prose pour des Esseintes," into describing it as not verse but prose. Nor need we detain ourselves with occasional pruderies, as when Maud Gonne's illegitimate daughter Iseult is referred to as "adoptive," or when a bit of morbidity in Lawrence must not be inquired into because this would be "impertinent or indecent." What should, however, give us pause is a narrowly moralizing Christian undertone which might be more acceptable if it came out into the open, but, in its subliminal form, makes the book uncourageously tendentious.

Thus Stewart the moralizer wonders whether Hardy's esthetic is "not rather the ingenious rationalizing of a constitutional morbidity," implying that other esthetics are independent from the psyche that begets them and that neurosis makes for inferior esthetics: the first assumption always, the second frequently, unfair. Thus, too, Maud Gonne is told that "she ought to have abrupted" her relationship with Yeats; and Yeats is rapped on the knuckles for having given the Christian story in *The Resurrection* an orgiastically Dionysian background. Again, Joyce is ironically reprimanded because, though living modestly, he also indulged "in sporadic improvidence no doubt congruous with the artistic nature" but, presumably, beneath the sober frugality of a Scottish academician and writer of mystery novels such as Professor Stewart. Academicism becomes schoolmarmishness when poor Bloom's pathetic masturbation is labeled "misconduct." The "flux of passion" in Lawrence sometimes "loses such dignity as it draws from suffering," and unsuffer-

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ingly fluctuating passions do not obtain Mr. Stewart's moral suffrage.

What lies behind this is Stewart's Christian proselytizing. *The Wings of the Dove,* "it must be felt, is Christian, not pagan, writing"—the alternatives themselves are curious, but *must* it be felt? To Stewart, this is "tragedy, like Shakespeare's, concerned less with happiness and misery than with grace," thus, at a stroke, converting both Shakespeare and tragedy—though a posthumous conversion is apt to be even more suspect than a deathbed one. But here, at least, Stewart shows his hand. Elsewhere he operates with unrevealed motives, as when he demands from Yeats's thought a final ideological resolution, and at first condemns the lack of it (a belief in eternal recurrence or reincarnation, we are told, could not have cheered up Yeats or anybody else—as if cheering oneself up were the necessary ultimate aim!) and then invents a specious last-minute orthodoxy for Yeats. This he manages partly by taking Crazy Jane's "All things remain in God" as the true statement for which Yeats's other metaphysical theories are merely "a metaphor." Especially jesuitical, however, is the argument which while it warns, out of one corner of the mouth, that one must not see in "The Man Who Died" a *rapprochement* with Christianity cut off by Lawrence's death, nonetheless suggests, out of the other corner, that "a culture which actively rejects Christianity must be a culture which Christianity has conditioned, and the 'rejection' is likely to be a term in a dialectic process. . . ." This venerable bit of ecclesiastic sophistry creaks in every joint, but Mr. Stewart continues to strain it by perceiving beneath the fable "an allegory witnessing to a growth of historical consciousness" which, for him, implies a Christian vision.

Such is the main key to the values of this final volume in the *Oxford History.* Those of the eight writers who cannot be Christianized, or, at least, shown, like Kipling, to possess old-time morality, come out less well than those who, like James, Yeats, and Lawrence, can be twisted into *animae naturaliter Christianae.* Mind you, Professor Stewart is a decent enough chap to like even Hardy and Shaw, Conrad and Joyce, but often this liking sounds far too much like a self-imposed pensum or Christian penance. *Eight Modern Writers,* despite some valid incidental *aperçus,* is not quite original and pertinent enough to interest us as criticism, nor quite objective and authoritative enough to be meaningful literary history.

John Simon

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SPACECRITICS

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF GOD. By Hillis Miller. Harvard University Press. $7.50.

THE WIDENING GYRE. By Joseph Frank. Rutgers University Press. $6.00.

Ever since the war, American criticism has remained relatively stagnant. This doesn't mean that no outstanding individual works have been produced, or that no gifted and original newcomers have appeared on the scene. It is from a methodological point of view that no striking innovations have taken place; the assumptions on which literary criticism has been living, in the universities and in the journals, have not been fundamentally challenged. This in itself is not necessarily distressing; it may well be that the developments that occured earlier, in the course of the thirties, were so rich and varied that it took more than twenty years to refine and exploit them to the full. Yet, a certain paralysis seems to have set in, especially in comparison with recent European effervescence. New Criticism has turned into the fruitful and didactically effective discipline of close reading, replacing philology and conventional literary history as a propedeutic, but unable itself to lead to larger undertakings. Marxist and psychoanalytical criticism have shown little vitality; although their existence has been known for quite a while, the impact of writers such as Lukács, Benjamin and more lately Adorno has hardly been felt here. Even works that appear on first reading to open up new perspectives, such as Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism,* turn out at closer examination to be merely a somewhat artificial synthesis of well-established earlier approaches, a combination of archetypal and formalist criticism less interesting than were, in their days, the essays of T. S. Eliot. The newcomer who tries to find stimulation and guidance in the work of his elders may well be overcome by a feeling of weariness that drives him to other shores or, if he is timid, to an even more remote return to traditional literary history.

To this somewhat gloomy picture, one should not oppose an image of brilliant liveliness and enthusiasm in Europe. The fact that certain recent developments in France and Germany seem endowed with a kind of revolutionary freshness is due, to no small degree, to the incredible inertia that surrounds them; if one speaks of a twenty-year-long stagnation in the United States, one should speak of a century-old stagnation in most European academic institutions. And if one can regret that American criticism has not been sufficiently aware of certain theoretical

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speculations on the continent, and has shown a somewhat provincial reticence in wanting to remain almost dogmatically empirical, this shortcoming is more than counter-balanced by the profound ignorance and distrust with which Europeans consider what is most valuable and sound in American approaches to literature.

In fact, it is not true that the main currents of European criticism have not penetrated into this country. Good phenomenological and existential criticism is being taught and written on American campuses; the suppler, highly enlightened historical methods of Curtius and Auerbach have made considerable inroads; Cassirer has curtailed the somewhat fantastic subjectivism that surrounded many American concerns with myth and symbol; Leo Spitzer's influence is felt in more erudite and rigorous attempts at stylistic analysis. But much of this goes on behind the often opaque walls that, in most universities, keep the various departments hermetically sealed off from each other, at least as far as critical methods are concerned. In an eloquent passage from his preface to *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages,* Ernst Robert Curtius complained bitterly about "the specialized departmentalization of our [German] universities . . . which expresses the intellectual assumptions of the 1850's and which, in 1950, seem as antiquated as the railroad system of a century ago." Things are by no means as rigid in the United States today, but the fact remains that American scholars and critics have often remained oblivious to methods carried out, sometimes very successfully, by their French or German counterparts across the hall—the same being just as true, I hasten to add, in the other direction. As a result, even the closest academic coexistence has not succeeded in breaking down the barriers that separate American and European criticism.

It is therefore particularly satisfying to record the publication of two recent essays that seem to mark a new departure. Both undeniably belong to the field of English and American studies, but in one of them —Hillis Miller's *The Disappearance of God*—the filiation with certain contemporary European trends is overt; in the other—Joseph Frank's *The Widening Gyre*—the same filiation is more intuitive and, for that reason, all the more striking. This conscious or unconscious resemblance to European models is, in itself, totally unimportant. Nothing could be falser than to suggest that American critics should go to school in European criticism. Something much more fundamental is at stake: each approach, in its own way, has worked toward an understanding of the literary process as such. In so doing, they are now both confronted with problems that have appeared as the result of the increased awareness they have brought about; to the extent that, in both cases, this awareness

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has brought them closer to the true center of their subject, they are bound to encounter similar questions (though, at first, the similarity may remain hidden by radical differences in terminology and tradition). A more active exchange of ideas—for which perhaps no real need was felt until now—will then inevitably take place. These two books are symptoms of such a tendency, and one can only hope for European equivalents to follow soon.

The methodological novelty of Hillis Miller's and Joseph Frank's books is perhaps best illustrated by trying to define what, for all their differences, they have in common. The differences are clear enough. Mr. Miller's book deals with a group of writers belonging to a well-defined period of English literature and is based on an exhaustive knowledge of their entire literary production, not merely the main texts but also such collateral material as journals, letters, etc. It succeeds in its avowed purpose of being a major contribution, offering not only integrated images of complex figures, but placing them within the relevant period. And Mr. Miller doesn't stop there. He attempts a general diagnosis of the spiritual crisis that characterizes the English nineteenth century and relates it to the fundamental movements of Western thought. Joseph Frank's collection of articles offers instead an almost random collection of shorter pieces on twentieth-century authors from Proust and Malraux to Blackmur and John Peale Bishop, rather loosely connected by some of the theoretical points made in the first essay. The methods of analysis are also very different. Miller's approach derives directly from that of his erstwhile senior colleague at Johns Hopkins, Georges Poulet; his book indicates how much of an impact this critic had during the very few years he spent in this country. To point to this influence in no way detracts from Miller's originality, for if Poulet's approach assumes considerable erudition and a "total" knowledge of a

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work as a whole, it also assumes an irrevocable subjectivity in the relationship between critic and poet and thus postulates the singularity of criticism. One can copy Curtius, or Spitzer, or even Bachelard, but to copy Poulet is to betray him. Miller never does so; yet the presence of some of Poulet's frames of reference and structural devices as well as, on the negative side, the avoidance of certain historical and formalist techniques, give to Miller's book a very distinctive character. Although his manner never becomes mechanical or systematic in the bad sense of the term, it points to its own method with obvious and legitimate pride and wears it, so to speak, for all to behold. As a result, the similarity in approach with European critics of the same generation who have also been influenced by Poulet is very apparent. Nothing in method or in quality sets aside Hillis Miller's book from those of Jean-Pierre Richard, for instance, or Jean Starobinski, or Jean Rousset, except for the irreducible originality which this way of dealing with literature demands. Joseph Frank, on the other hand, remains eclectic and varied, reminiscent at times of Ransom and Tate in a relaxed mood, frequently resorting to straightforward exposition, without even seeming to apply in practice the very interesting speculations on spatial form that are indicated in his first essay.[1] And yet, something similar is taking place in both essays that sets them apart from other current American criticism.

It is best put negatively: neither of these studies is historical or New Critical, and both—each in its own way—deal with the rejection of the concepts of form and of history that have been at the basis of much contemporary work. The great contribution of New Criticism had been to retrieve the autonomy of the literary work and to preserve the delicate equilibrium of its structure from the onslaughts of crudely deterministic systems. This allowed its practitioners to acquire a flexible and subtle exegetic skill, still without equivalence in Europe. But it also had grave drawbacks: by setting up works of literature as if they were a priori given entities susceptible of being described and analyzed in themselves, it made false assumptions about the nature of poetic language. Much was gained by separating the temporal and spatial organization of literary language, as it crystallizes in rhythm and imagery, from the experience of time and space. But even more was lost by ignoring the highly problematic and intentional nature of these entities. Since they are made of invented space and invented time, they cannot possibly be

1. An interesting encounter with Poulet's work nevertheless occurs in Joseph Frank's case also. In his recently published essay on Proust, *L'espace proustien* (Gallimard, 1963), Georges Poulet refers to Mr. Frank's early article on Proust which dates from 1945, and indicates the similarity of their views on Proust.

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described as if they were natural objects—i.e., objects whose spatial and temporal nature are given and not posited, let alone invented. The hopeless confusion that surrounds the notion of intentionality in Wimsatt and which is carried over in Frye's discussions of the problem, indicate the shortcomings of the underlying ontology. The practical consequence is that New Criticism was never able to rise above the essential but merely preparatory task of local exegesis, and never offered a convincing interpretation of entire works or historical periods.

Seen as reactions to this, Mr. Frank and Mr. Miller's books can indeed be heralded as a renewal. They break out of the impasse of American formalism by rediscovering the constitutive and intentional nature of poetic language, and they both do so, albeit in very different ways, by growing conscious of the true nature of literary space. Instead of the frozen, static space of the New Critical form (or, for that matter, of Northrop Frye's system or archetypes), Joseph Frank sees esthetic space as the fundamental project of the writer who transforms random experience into the order of a spatial structure. It matters little that Mr. Frank's historical exposition of this process is highly debatable; his references to Lessing and Worringer are very sketchy intellectual history, and his way of equating "spatial form" with twentieth-century literature would demand so many qualifications as to become practically meaningless; the problem goes back at least as far as the early Renaissance. But his basic insight is nonetheless valid. A novelist like Proust—far from imitating or preserving empirical time, modulates, by a system of complex reflective juxtapositions, from a temporal into a spatial realm.[2] Proust's entire novel can be understood only in terms of this esthetic project. "Proust's 'pure time,' " says Mr. Frank, "obviously is not time at all—it is perception in a moment of time, that is to say, space." One should add that this space is essentially different from actual space in that it has the richness as well as the frailty of an intentional act.

Mr. Frank develops this insight with great clarity in his first essay, and illustrates it effectively in his study of Malraux's books on art history. But the purely literary essays that conclude the work make little use of the methodological possibilities inherent in the concept of spatial form. The fact that they make some prominent New Critics look themselves like part of history, by treating them with proper distance, is the only evidence of Mr. Frank's further critical evolution. Hillis Miller on the other hand, without going into theory, has made similar convictions an integral part of his method.

2. Mr. Frank's description coincides with the most perceptive analyses by French critics, especially Ramon Fernandez (*Messages,* p. 160; p. 210 in American translation) quoted by both Frank and Poulet, and G. Poulet, *op. cit.*

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This method proceeds by the organization of a complete literary work in terms of the underlying intent, though not in the narrow psychological sense that the author somehow expresses or objectifies certain private obsessions. Though individual with each writer, this intent marks all literary creation and thus is susceptible of universal understanding. The development of this intent will not necessarily follow the chronological order in which the works have been written, and the critic has to rearrange the material in terms of his understanding of the whole. It is therefore not true (as is so often claimed), that the rearrangement suggested by critics of this school is arbitrary; like all exegesis, it assumes a prior understanding, but it stands or falls with the quality of that understanding. Such a procedure is altogether sound from a hermeneutic point of view. There is nothing different here from what happens when, in an interpretation of a short poem, we feel entitled to progress not simply line by line, but by establishing relationships backward and forward. (Whether the critic has the right, as Miller, J. P. Richard and others do, to sever without further ado passages from the contexts in which they appear, is a vital matter, but one with which I cannot deal here.) At any rate, as a result of this ordered *découpage,* to use a term recently suggested by Roland Barthes, we are no longer left with a chaotic succession, but with a figure, a trajectory, a network, from which emerges (if the critic is a good critic) the accurate image of the author's undertaking. Image, network, figure, trajectory—all these terms are spatial metaphors, and it should by now be clear that the universal character of the literary intent resides, for Hillis Miller, in its "spatial" nature, exactly in the sense defined by Mr. Frank. Hence the importance of geometrical figures (circles, spirals, triangles, gyres) in this terminology, hence also a frequent interest in parallels with the plastic arts. What Mr. Miller offers us, in his frequently masterful condensations of complete lifeworks, is like a projection on one plane of intricate entities that exist in multiple dimensions. But such a projection is possibly only because this tendency is present in and determined the original work itself. The "existential project" (to quote Barthes again) of the poet or novelist is not just any project, but the specifically esthetic one of converting time into space. Hillis Miller does not explicitly speak of space; he uses instead a semi-theological vocabulary and, as his title indicates, sees Victorian poetry as a dialectic of proximity and distance (which are, of course, spatial terms) in relation to the divine. But this is clearly because, in his view, the Victorian effort to reconquer God becomes for the Victorian writer the esthetic effort to reconquer space in the closed circularity of the poetic form. Failure (as in the case of Matthew Arnold)

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or success (as in the case of Emily Brontë) to reconquer this space, coincides with failure or success to reach God—and Hillis Miller is very careful and rigorous in not making this failure or success into an evaluative criterion. One can say that, for Miller, the artist's God is space. The entire method proceeds from there.

Before taking this question a bit further, I want to stress that Hillis Miller's insight allows him to extend our understanding of these writers well beyond the point reached until now. *The Disappearance of God* is without doubt one of the most penetrating and original works of criticism to appear in this country for quite a while. There is much to take issue with, in detail as well as in the general considerations to which I must here confine myself. But in general conception as well as in specific contributions, this is an impressive achievement. Mr. Miller has a sly way of making his argument rebound; at the very moment that one suspects him of going astray, he turns about in his last paragraphs and forces one to reconsider one's judgment. The entire book is organized in that way; after working through an amusing de Quincey, a somewhat lengthy Browning and a somewhat sketchy Emily Brontë, one is suddenly stirred up by an extremely convincing Arnold, to end up with truly outstanding pages on Hopkins. But when all this is said, I still must confess that I find Mr. Miller's concluding sentence and his introduction (which is in fact a summarizing conclusion and was written last) disappointing. Not because of any real slackening in his thought, but because they reveal a flaw in the method.

Both Mr. Frank and Mr. Miller write very disparagingly about history. "By this [spatial] juxtaposition," says Mr. Frank, "history becomes a-historical . . . What has occurred . . . may be described as the transformation of the historical imagination into myth—an imagination for which historical time does not exist. . . ." And in his introduction Mr. Miller argues against historicism with an ardor reminiscent of Nietzsche's second *Unzeitgemäze Betrachtung*, "Of the use and misuse of History for Life." This aversion to history seems consistent enough; history being, by definition, temporal, it is bound to appear as the very chaos which the esthetic consciousness is obliged to put into shape. And historicism, which implies a certain priority of temporal over spatial events, thus naturally becomes the main enemy of the literary sensibility.

Is this not the point where the assumption of spatial form begins to reveal its inadequacy, in that it dangerously oversimplifies the dialectical relationship between space and time in the work of art? What is called "time" here is the inauthentic, degraded, evasive temporality of everyday

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experience. To this is opposed the cycle of myth and nature beyond time, which can indeed be called spatial. According to Mr. Frank and Mr. Miller, the nineteenth- and twentieth-century writer strives to be re-united with this kind of space, driven at times by such strong nostalgia as to call it God. Mr. Miller refers to this as the "heroic attempts to recover immanence in a world of transcendence" and he can go very far in showing how and why these heroic attempts fail. What he doesn't see (though he comes tantalizingly close) is that Arnold certainly, and most likely Hopkins, are ahead of him in having discovered that, by presumably transcending time towards esthetic space, the realm one reaches is no longer spatial at all. Instead, they re-discover time, although on an altogether different, more fundamental and, one might say with some caution, "purer" level—although this purity is not Proust's "pure time, which is but space." Mr. Miller's flawless essay on Arnold shows very well how the spatial dialectic of proximity and distance becomes superseded, not just metaphorically but in actual fact, by a radically different temporal dialectic—but from which Mr. Miller fails to draw the conclusions that would impair his method.[3] The matter is even more involved and more instructive in the case of Hopkins. With admirable consistency, Hillis Miller shows us how Hopkins devised strategies of infinite refinement and delicacy to detect or create an analogy between the self (which is temporal) and a natural God which he still experiences, probably under strong Hellenic influence, as spatial; we owe Miller's outstanding reading of "Pied Beauty" to such an analysis—the only example, by the way, of a poem read as a whole in the entire book. When these attempts fail, Hopkins recognizes that the failure is due to his too narrow conception of God as a natural, spatial entity and, finding support in pre-Socratic thought as well as in non-Thomist Christian theology, he expands his conception of the divine to include a mode of being that is no longer natural or analogically related to nature. Mr. Miller describes this very well, with a perfect awareness of the philosophical and theological background of this "conversion," and with an equally sensitive ear for the changes it brings about in Hopkins' poetic language. But the critic's own language is less rigorous at this point, for spatial metaphors such as "interlocking harmony of nature in

3. I don't think that, in spite of many appearances to the contrary, the same spatial priority can be found in the thought of Georges Poulet, if one considers it in its evolving totality. The determining esthetic event, for Poulet, is always the impulse of originating consciousness in what he calls the *cogito*, and the *cogito* is for him entirely temporal. It is significant in that respect that, after the above-mentioned essay on Proust which seems to coincide so entirely with Joseph Frank's views, he inserts an essay on Bergson which moves in precisely the opposite direction and in which Proust is refered to as a "*penseur intermittent*."

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Christ" or the naturalistically spatial reading of the word "pitch" in Poem 65 (at the expense of the much richer "throw-ness" merely indicated in a footnote) contradict Hopkins' own conviction at this stage of his spiritual growth. By now, the poet no longer locates man's project in relation to Being, but in his will, consciousness or, as he calls it, *arbitrium*. But this kind of will no longer exists as the will-towards-space of Joseph Frank's Proustian artist. It has finally separated itself, perhaps with infinite pain, from that illusion. It now exists in the difficult, unresolved realm of time, where everything is always still ahead of us, at once threateningly imminent and elusively beyond our grasp. Mr. Miller rightly puts the exclamation of the dying nun in "The Wreck of the Deutschland" "O Christ, Christ, come quickly" at the center of Hopkins's doctrine of grace, but he fails to stress that this is essentially a temporal outcry. Throughout his crucial last pages on Hopkins, I find Hillis Miller's distinctions between "nature" and "God," "correspondence" and "*arbitrium*," "freedom" and "grace" insufficiently thought through; it is quite possible that these distinctions remained blurred in Hopkins himself, but it would have been Mr. Miller's task to unravel them instead of maintaining the ambivalence. His reading of Arnold would have been an excellent model.

Of course, had he done so, his method would have been affected, and he could not have written the same introduction. For if poetic

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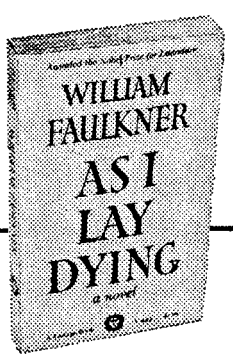

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language is not really oriented towards space, but ultimately towards time, then its description can never be as plastically "closed" as Mr. Miller would have it, nor can it be so loftily disengaged from actual exegesis or history. A text that exists in time cannot be projected in a definitive and well-rounded shape. It has to be integrated into a continuous interpretation, for it is itself a fragment in the incessant interpretation of Being which makes up our history. Those so-called spatial and meta-historical visions of literature are in fact still imprisoned in the fallen time from which they try to free themselves. This is all too apparent in the conventional view of literary history to which both authors remain committed; I have already mentioned Mr. Frank's rather useless excursion into eighteenth-century esthetics. But in Hillis Miller's book, the error is more insidious, for he seems to hold to the naive fiction of a past "where being and value lie in *this* world" and he seems to think of Romanticism as the last period in which man set out "to create through his own efforts a marvelous harmony of words which will integrate man, nature and God." Romanticism is precisely the period during which the illusory character of spatial analogies was being revealed, often in a much more radical and consistent manner than in post-Romantic symbolism and Victorian poetry. I can think of no better challenge for the critical method so competently represented by these two writers, than to apply it to the main figures of the Romantic period.

Paul de Man

THE MASTER BUILDER

FEARFUL SYMMETRY. By Northrop Frye. Beacon Press. $2.45.
ANATOMY OF CRITICISM. By Northrop Frye. Princeton. $6.00.
FABLES OF IDENTITY. By Northrop Frye. Harcourt, Brace & World. $2.95.
THE WELL-TEMPERED CRITIC. By Northrop Frye. Indiana. $4.50.

The center of our concern in this review will be Northrop Frye's "system" or "structure" of criticism. His first book, on Blake's poetry, was important, and so were his two most recent books, *Fables of Identity* and *The Well-Tempered Critic*. But these days Frye is influential and controversial mainly in so far as he is proposing and applying an overarching system of criticism. Hence, the main emphasis here will be upon his most sustained effort to build such a system, *Anatomy of Criticism*.

Still, the paradoxes in the early pages of this book tempt one to

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draw up a blacklist instead of discussing his system as a whole. For instance, on page twenty of the *Anatomy* he says that:

> . . . The present book . . . takes certain literary values for granted, as fully established by critical experience. . . .

In all four of his books he shows that he means this. But not far from this comforting claim he tells us that when value-judgements about literature are made they are at best "fashionable or generally accepted," but not "objective." And he drives home this point by insisting that a "definitive technique for separating the excellent from the less excellent" does not exist. So far as we can *know,* there is no "better critic" (though in other passages he often tells us that there is such a being). All critics, he tells us, are part of "the history of taste," and their judgements are condemned to transience and relativity. But if this is so, how can there be certain works of art "fully established by critical experience?" If individual critical judgements are nothing but fashionable "chit-chat" and we have no definitive standards how can there be an "established" literary value-judgement?

In an effort to meet this accusation Frye makes two moves: one bold, the other evasive. First he says that when a given critic is asked to defend or establish a judgement he must keep silent! He is a busy man. It is obvious (to him) that Milton is better than Blakemore, and

> . . . the more obvious to him this becomes, the less time he will want to waste in belaboring the point. . . .

And if he dares to defend his judgement, the whole incident becomes "merely one more document in the history of taste": relative, unreliable, tentative. To try to establish a value-judgement is to undo it. And to make the chaos complete Frye has been saying all along that each judgement is stuck in the "history of taste" whether or not someone tries to establish it. What we have is paradox after paradox—or contradiction after contradiction—with an occasional tautology like: A given critic is to be trusted. Why trust him? *Favete linguis*: he can be trusted because he is trustworthy—at least until he tries to justify that trust.

The second evasive move Frye makes in his efforts to establish some value-judgements while cutting the ground out from under them all is this: he tells us that "the *total* experience of criticism" establishes a given judgement. And he italicizes the word "total." But he also tells us in some of his most scornful prose that this "*total* experience" is brimming over with "casual, sentimental, and prejudiced value-judgements"; and besides, Frye is always certain that we have no way of distinguishing the dross from the metal of critical experience.

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On such a basic topic as the role of evaluation in criticism, one feels discouraged by equivocation on words like "value-judgement" and "established," and such bold question-begging. Certainly one feels dissatisfied if one shares with Frank Kermode the conviction that criticism has as its primary contributions illumination and instruction. One finds very little illumination in these all-too-important paradoxes, and very little instruction in the tautologies that Frye so unashamedly uses to back them up.

Still, the prize is worth the effort: Frye is trying to develop a "totally intelligible structure of knowledge," one that a bright nineteen-year-old could understand, and that could give his teachers a coherent understanding of literature and literary criticism.

One of the central working assumptions of Frye's thoughts on criticism is that, as he puts it in the *Anatomy,* "a systematic study can only progress." He uses at crucial points in his thought the assumption that to build and investigate any structure of knowledge is to be engaged in an essentially progressive project, like doing physics or mathematics. But even if Frye's works were to indicate a unified structure or system (which, unfortunately for us all, we shall find they do not), the assumption that all studies of structures or systems are "progressive" in any informative sense of this word is false. Frye, for instance, likes to compare—always very vaguely—criticism with the natural sciences, and with the help of his assumption and the ill-fitting clothing of such words as "objective," "science," and "postulate," he hopes to usher criticism into the house of truly progressive sciences. But even a fairly experienced butler can spot them before they start up the steps.

A system, Frye quite rightly contends, must remove our thought from narrowness, must correct the myopic view by making us stand back and see some broad organizing design. Like the theory of evolution in biology (and Frye makes this comparison himself), a systematic study of literature must fit bits and pieces of our insight and information about literature into a large conceptual framework. The synoptic views that Frye mentions, like biology, physics, and mathematics, have been indeed progressive: for centuries men have been purifying them of inconsistencies and randomness, and broadening their power to subsume and predict particular facts. But to say that these particular systems with their precise vocabularies and severe rules are progressive is to say one thing, and to say that all systems, even conceptual frameworks that are only roughly analogous to these, will inevitably (or even hopefully) turn out to be progressive is to say quite a different thing.

Aside from being synoptic, systems are, according to Frye, "in-

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ductive." They are "based upon" (a very loose metaphor) facts or experience. This applies to Frye's chosen natural sciences without question; and let us say, using the word "inductive" as vaguely as Frye does, that his system is inductive too. But does this make Frye's system automatically progressive as he assumes it will? Does this—and a "structure"—make it inevitable or even probable that future circumspect critics will enrich it theoretically and practically?

There are many systems "inductively" related to observable facts (and Frye, as we shall notice later, never distinguishes between sound and arbitrary induction) which stand like ruins along the Appian Way to the Eternal City of man's intellectual dreams. All of them are regarded as valiant, sustained efforts to rescue our minds from provinciality, and all of them are considered to have had *some* explicit relationship to human experience. For instance, there are systems of metaphysics which an occasional scholar or writer will pass through or even steal a brick or two from, and through which guides will lead tourists. But for the most part these people take away from these systems more than they contribute; the systems themselves are not progressive in anything like the ways biology and physics are, for example.

What kind of "system" is Frye constructing? A system is an organized group of entities, where the word "organized" is supposed to remind us of the unity of a living organism with its single integument and its intimately related parts. The opposite of the systematic, as Frye so often mentions throughout his writings, is the episodic, the disconnected (he goes so far as to say that any criticism that does not fit into a single, overarching structure is "meaningless criticism"). In a system, every basic principle helps explain or illuminate every other basic part; that is, a system is *consistent,* whatever else it may be; its basic principles do not exclude or contradict each other. Frye is aware of this requirement for a "totally intelligible structure of knowledge" when he says in the *Fables of Identity* that he will not

> . . . muddle the study of literature with a schizophrenic dichotomy between subjective-emotional and objective-descriptive aspects of meaning. . . .

But there *is* a gap or dichotomy running down the middle of his notes towards a system, a gap between what he himself calls "subjective" value-judgements or "meaningless criticism" and "knowledge" or "real criticism." Real criticism, according to Frye, is objective, in the sense that it moves within a descriptive structure and avoids prescriptive, episodic value-judgements. And his attempts to cross this gap between history or direct experience and the "ideal order" or "*structure*

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of criticism" (his italics) are either as confusing as we have seen them to be in the opening of this paper, or they are as vaguely metaphorical as they are in *The Well-Tempered Critic,* where he assures us that though the fleeting and permanent aspects of criticism look separate they are in fact "inseparable, two halves of one great whole which is the *possession* of literature. . . ." (his italics). But how can the meaningless and the meaningful, the temporal and the eternal, the particular and the universal have any relationship to each other if all we know about them is that they contradict each other? If ever there was a "schizophrenic dichotomy" between the emotive and the descriptive or between the historical and the structural it is in the works of Northrop Frye; if ever basic principles failed to explain each other but simply raised more problems than they solved, it is in these works. A totally intelligible body of knowledge must exhibit intelligible relations between its parts, not simply reassure the reader that there are some sort of relations between them.

Of course such a split as Frye's is not new in the history of system-building. Plato had one much like Frye's when he discussed the "participation" of forms in individual things; and Descartes had a

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complex tectonic earthquake of them centering on his radical split between mind and body (he showed how hopeless this split was when he tried rather half-heartedly to connect the mind with the body by means of his laughable pineal gland—here was a scientist who knew he was in trouble when he could not make connections intelligible). One does not have a system, in the strict sense of that word, when the connections between basically different parts are unintelligible or a matter of faith. On the other hand, one of the reasons why Darwin's hypothesis about organisms and their environments is systematic and progressive is that there are in it rich patterns of observable relationships between his two sorts of entities—organism and environment. The difference between the two hypotheses is the difference between an hypothesis that causes more puzzles than it does illumination and one that makes its subject-matter more intelligible than it was before. Or to put it another way, the difference is between an arbitrary, fictive model and a scrupulously descriptive generalization from the facts.

Frye's complex dichotomy, or set of dichotomies, takes a special form in his discussions of Archetypal Criticism. In the Third Essay of the *Anatomy* he makes a distinction between what is "deliberately" written and what is "creatively" written. To write deliberately is to perform "an act of conscious will," as when one writes down a recipe; the poet does this when he "displaces" or makes plausible an archetype in a particular poem. To write creatively is to be a midwife to one's own mind, to let "the universal spirit of poetry" push an archetype into one's consciousness. In the finished product of literary art this distinction becomes a distinction between "the theme itself" of a work and the "rhetorical decoration" of that work, the "form" of the work, the conventions or recurrent archetypal images it embodies, and the "content," ". . . life, reality, experience, nature, imaginative truth, social conditions. . . ." Poets "displace" myths in somewhat the same way a midwife wraps up a new-born baby, deliberately, for good reasons, but secondarily, inessentially—the primary work is not done so deliberately or actively. And again, the different processes produce different effects—form and content.

Any inquiry into the relationship between these two profoundly different processes or products is bound to be as unfruitful as our initial inquiry into the relationship between subjectivity and objectivity in Frye's writings. For instance, if we look at the first three "phases" or ways of critical analysis (the literal, the descriptive, and the formal), and then look at the last two phases (archetypal and anagogic), we find it difficult to relate these two sets to each other. The descriptive,

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the literary, and the formal are involved again in that "time-bound ego," and with "rhetorical decorations," and the archetypal and anagogic contexts of analysis are involved with "the inner form of history," which transcends the process of history.

Some critics seem to think that Archetypal Criticism is all that Frye wanted to develop; this is, in the light of all we have been saying, wrong. Archetypal Criticism is only one phase, albeit a very important one, of a system which seeks to embrace all cognitively respectable criticism.

Frye's distinguished book on Blake makes it quite plain that for Blake the sun is the emblem of a deeply benevolent, passionate poetic genius at work; and Yeats's useful writings on Shelley make it plain that for Shelley the sun is a quite different emblem; in Yeats's words it is "the being and the source of all tyrannies." Now many problems, or rather puzzles with no clues for their solution, suggest themselves. Which one of these poets is using the sun archetypally? And if both are, how does the archetypal critic discern *the* archetype as far as the sun is concerned "in" both of these poets' works? Or to get to the bottom of the puzzles: how does one defend a particular way of stripping away the "rhetorical decorations" or products of the "time-bound ego" from the archetypal images themselves? Frye writes a great deal about the recurrence or repetition of images, but arbitrarily leaves out the all-important differences between uses of a given image.

The claim that two images are, or are not, instances of the same archetype requires that one insert gingerly that all-important phrase *mutatis mutandis*. This pithy little phrase and its equivalents have sobered many a potentially progressive scientist; but Frye does not bother with it or any of its equivalents. The only hint I can find about how to strip off the particulars from a universal is in the "stand back" metaphor which he uses in both the *Anatomy* and the *Fables*. According to this, we see the archetype by standing back far enough from the work of art so that we cannot see the brush-strokes or the vestiges of "displacement." Aside from the possibility that if you step far enough back from a Shakespearean play you may fall back into your own prejudices instead of into a "structure of knowledge," one finds this spatial metaphor not only useless but question-begging. When you step back from a painting, the dropping-out that occurs is automatic and unimpeachable—the laws of physiology and psychology are doing the dropping-out for you, so to speak. But when you generalize, you are doing something neither automatic nor unimpeachable. Two questions occur when you generalize or find universals in

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particulars, questions it makes no sense to ask about standing back: what do you drop out from a given work? And why drop it out? What aspects of Blake's and/or Shelley's suns do we drop out, and why?

Archetypal Criticism is really not an inductive study of poems and plays. It is a purely question-begging or tautological enterprise, a boldly arbitrary insistence on a deep verbal distinction (between form and content), an insistence that can neither be tested by the facts nor help us to choose between the facts. To use Blake's phrase, Archetypal Criticism, like the whole of Frye's system, is a "Cloven Fiction" between universal and particular, not a factually testable and inductively useful hypothesis.

It seems plain that Frye's "supreme" system cannot be taught or learned, let alone further developed, because it is made up of impenetrable paradox, profound incoherence, and a bold but ultimately arbitrary disregard for the facts of literary experience.

Philip P. Hallie

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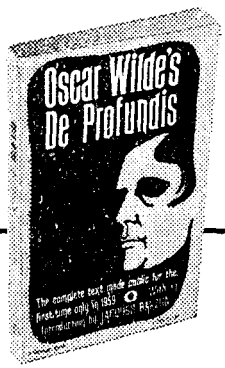

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WIT AND WISDOM

TO THE PALACE OF WISDOM: STUDIES IN ORDER AND ENERGY FROM DRYDEN TO BLAKE. By Martin Price. Doubleday. $5.95.

It goes without saying that Mr. Price has written a book of considerable importance for readers with a professional interest in eighteenth-century literature. Experts and aspiring graduate students alike, whether they are with him or against him, will feel obliged to acknowledge his treatment of individual writers and of the whole period. For his views, strongly put and definitive, represent an approach that has become classic during the past thirty years in criticism of the literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. "This is a study" we read in the Preface, "of the way in which movements of ideas interact with literary form in Restoration and eighteenth-century England." Because the approach is so representative, *To the Palace of Wisdom* has an interest also for a wider literary public, for all readers concerned with what happens to the experience of literature when critics attempt to trace relations between literature and "thought." In accepting this type of critical analysis as a guide to the experience of particular works, readers naturally ask, "With what profit?", and "With what loss?" They may also raise more disturbing questions: "Is this kind of criticism an illusion?" "Is it possible to write about the 'interaction of ideas and literary forms' while maintaining an alert responsiveness to the work itself, to the indefinable 'that' of the most vivid reading experience?" "How true can we remain to the reading made without ulterior motive, the reading of most complete relevance to the literary 'expression' (though we grant that relevance includes our sense of where the work stands both in time and in the timeless space of imagination)?".

Nearly forty years ago in writing of Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca, T. S. Eliot illustrated the problem and the pitfall for the "ideological" critic. After questioning whether we can properly speak of what Shakespeare "thought," he went on to insist that Shakespeare was not "inferior to Dante" because of his contact with the philosophy of the Stoics. In raising the question it is clear that Eliot was thinking of Shakespeare's plays, of their poetic and dramatic expression; but just what was he thinking of in saying that there is "a great philosophy behind" Dante's poetry and a philosophy "behind" Shakespeare's that "is not great"? Where for the literary critic is "behind"? Where, that is, in relevant and demonstrable connection with the speeches of characters in a play?

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The academic tradition to which Mr. Price's book belongs, began, not with Eliot, but with Lovejoy, Willey, and Tillyard and has been fostered in many books and essays that have traced themes such as "the Great Chain of Being," "Order," "Nature," and "Truth" (scientific versus metaphysical) in literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Great Chain, golden once, though somewhat tarnished from over-use, now stretches from Shakespeare to Milton to Pope. Today all who read and run can see implications in *King Lear, Paradise Lost,* and the *Essay on Man* that seem surely relevant and that were neglected by critics and readers of the nineteenth century. The danger, as with "myth criticism," lies in the tendency to see only the common ideas and to lose or dull the response to the qualities that set individual works of literature apart from one another. Mr. Price, it should be said quickly, is too good a historian, too able a tactician and too accustomed to modern close reading to fall into this over-easy sort of leveling down.

He is at his surest and best, as might be expected, in writing about works which all will agree do present philosophic or moral positions, choices of life for both author and reader. It would be hard to find a better account than Mr. Price gives of Dryden's "judicious and learned position" in *Religio Laici,* or of the moral dialogue between poet, speaker and interlocutor in the *Essay on Man.* The analysis of the dramatic language of Pope's poem is handled with great skill, particularly the contrast between "the voice of selfhood" and "the complex one assumed by the poet." Here the critic keeps the reader in live contact with the texture of poetic expression. Nor can I think of a truer and clearer presentation of the implied moral and esthetic standards in Pope's great "Timon" epistle (*To Burlington*). Mr. Price is a moralist, and a perceptive one, and hence very much at home in tracing Pope's "exploration . . . of the life of moral choice" in the Horatian satires.

Less to be expected, perhaps, are the excellent criticisms of novelists, notably of Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding. Mr. Price handles the "mixture of motives" in Defoe's characters and in Defoe with appropriate detachment, resisting recent attempts to impose a consistent irony on the novels and the novelist: "candor disarms the moral judgement that irony would require." The able treatment of Lovelace's character and of Clarissa's resolve to die, and especially the analysis of her complex but not easily defined motives, almost persuaded this reluctant reader to agree that the novel is a great legend of a saint, if not quite a tragedy. Refusing to take sides with Dr. Johnson for

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Richardson and against Fielding, Mr. Price rightly emphasizes the depth of Fielding's "benevolent" morality and its relation to his use of comic artifice, to his "subversion of forms." It might be noted in passing that Mr. Price's criticism of Fielding lends no support to the present fashion of setting Fielding in unfavorable opposition to Jane Austen. (Jane Austen is not mentioned in *To the Palace of Wisdom.*) Fielding's definition of the love that reconciles "appetite" with "mind" depends on the same values and is expressed in the identical terms of "esteem and gratitude" that are the guarantee of "rational affection" in *Pride and Prejudice, Emma,* and *Mansfield Park.*

Mr. Price also writes sympathetically of authors without an obvious moral program, or writers in whom not "order" but "energy" predominate. He appreciates in Gay's *Trivia*—a poem that deserves appreciation—the interest in what Iris Murdoch calls the "contingent, messy, boundless, infinitely particular, and endlessly still-to-be-explained." Anyone who has tried to say something apt about Sterne, most bewildering of writers in the century, will admire the intelligibility of Mr. Price's analysis in terms of Diderot's paradoxical actor "who must be free of emotion in order to call up emotion in others. . . ." The chapter on the ultimate revolutionary, Blake, culminates in a comparison of Blake and Pope that happily resists the temptation to make Pope a Blake before his time. Mr. Price finds a place in his book, too, for writers in whom energy beats more faintly, in the poets of the mid-century—Thomson (who comes actually somewhat earlier), Young, Akenside, Collins, and Gray. There is a teasing sketch for a book on the picturesque, which is related interestingly to the "play-acting," the "trying-on" of new roles by these mild and tentative innovators.

But as we read one of the more general comments on Thomson, our original uneasiness about the basic critical approach of the book recurs. "The pattern [of *The Seasons*]," we are told, "prepares us to sense each experience as implicitly moral in significance." We should mind less if we read "*obviously* moral," for in a most obvious sense of moral, all of Thomson's descriptions and episodes are offered as grand examples of God's (or Nature's?) "complex, stupendous scheme of things." But Thomson lacked exactly that control of a style disciplined by moral feeling (he was not Wordsworth) that imparts "moral significance" implicitly through the resonances of words. Mr. Price is by contrast most convincing when he shows how Thomson catches in certain scenes "that curiously indefinable sense of the import of space"; much less so when he will have us believe—as Thompson

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would, too—that the "Inimitable happiness! which love/ Alone bestows" is felt *in* the description itself.

By insisting on "the moral significance" Mr. Price reminds his readers that *To the Palace of Wisdom* is a book with a thesis and the conscious product of the approach crudely outlined at the beginning of this review. I have deliberately neglected the general argument, because as often happens Mr. Price's book is superior to his method and his program. No one will work up much steam about a slightly forced moral interpretation of Thomson, but many readers will feel some irritation when faced with oversimplified and overemphatic moral and religious interpretations of Pope, Swift, and Fielding. Not because these writers are not morally serious, but because an injustice is done to their peculiar, sometimes confusing, modes of expression. When we read in the illuminating comparison of Pope and Blake that "Pope dramatizes the choice in the satires as a moral intensity that leads man beyond selfhood and makes his will one with God's," we may be tempted to ask irreverently, "Which Pope are we talking about?". (A charming Italian typist, glancing at a manuscript of mine in Rome asked, "*Ma* quale *Papa Alessandro*?") We come back to the simplest of reactions: such a remark just "doesn't sound like Pope." Confronted by a statement of this sort Pope himself would undoubtedly have been astute enough to allow that it expressed exactly what he must have meant. But like Mr. Rushworth in *Mansfield Park* he may have "hardly known what to do with so much meaning." But how does Mr. Price—and the school to which he belongs—arrive at a statement so portentously Christian? By setting the poetry of Pope and his contemporaries in a historical and philosophical context that makes it beguilingly easy to equate "anti-selfhood" with acceptance of the will of God. It is Pope, not T. S. Eliot, who murmurs, "*In la sua volontade. . . .*"

The historical context as Mr. Price outlines it in his introduction is certainly relevant. After alluding briefly to the "Idea of Order [universal order] of the Renaissance," he goes on to show how a rivalry of the conflicting orders becomes increasingly characteristic of philosophers and literary men of the later seventeenth century, of the intellectual world in which Pope was educated as a poet. Pascal's hierarchy of ascending but divided orders of "flesh," "mind," and "charity" is taken as representative of this new conflict, and adopted by Mr. Price as the basic analogue for his study of writers from Dryden to Blake. One source of strain and confusion for the reader lies in the doubt as to whether Pascal's triad is to be regarded as defining a historical context or as suggesting a flexible metaphor for different

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orders of experience and value. At times the "order of charity" seems to be taken as the pattern that the best works will certainly embody: they are best because they do in fact embody it. The strain is less evident when the model is most clearly regarded as defining a historical context, as in the chapters on Dryden and Swift, both of whom were schooled in seventeenth-century religious thought. They were also nearer in time and nearer in their interests to Pascal and his contemporaries than most of the writers treated in *To the Palace of Wisdom*. It would be impossible to read *Religio Laici* and *A Tale of a Tub* without reference to rival religious, moral, and intellectual traditions of the seventeenth century. Dryden is of all English poets the most obviously dialectical, and Mr. Price analyzes clearly and well the conflicts he presents and the resolution he reaches. He is a poet of "Augustan balance," of faith in "the order of mind," who arrives at a "quiet" compromise between "private Reason" and the authority of the Roman church. But as we read more sentences in which Pascal's "orders" are used as classifying devices, we begin to feel how un-Pascalian Dryden was. For example: "And if the Catholic Church shows us the order of the flesh usurping charity through rational cun-

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ning, the Reformation gives us the order of the flesh in all of its naked brutality:

> *The tender page with horny fists was gall'd*
> *And he was gifted most that loudest bawl'd. . . .*
> (*Religio Laici,* 404-5)

Dryden, we see (even from this single couplet), was a very impure dialectician: the gross aristocratic scorn, the outrageously funny unfairness of tone in "horny fists" and "loudest bawl'd" is inseparable from the mind of Dryden, from the "order" of experience that he—for better or worse—is building in this poem. The relevant display of mind on Dryden's page is not "the Reformation giving us the order of flesh in all of its naked brutality," but a smashing satirical denigration of the layman's rediscovery of his right to read and interpret the Holy Word. To be told further, that we have "in both Catholic and Protestant . . . the order of charity hopelessly confounded with the order of flesh; the word of God descends only to be misused. . ." tells us something about the Reformation in Pascalian terms, but little about the "thought" in Dryden's lines. The example of Dryden is important just because it is possible and appropriate to disengage from his poetry historically definable theological and philosophic views, as Mr. Price shows in the better parts of his discussion of *Religio Laici.* But even in a writer so full of "ideas" and "opinions," we find that the expressed idea appears as a qualification, subtle or crude, of what we have disengaged. Returning from our statement of Dryden's ideas to his text, we often feel that we may have been talking about seventeenth-century thought, but not about the poetic "thought" of Dryden's poetry. The dilemma posed for the literary critic by Eliot's example is not to be solved with ease, and charity demands sympathy for the writer who essays this most difficult form of criticism.

One source of trouble in *To the Palace of Wisdom* is typical of most criticism that insists on classifying works of literature by moral and theological categories. Too often in reading Mr. Price's book, after having followed a reasonable and perceptive analysis of a work or a passage, we are brought up short by his conclusions. The discussion of the *Epilogue to the Satires,* Pope's proud defense of his satirical calling, ends with this formulaic description of "the politics of the Friend" (Pope's adversary in the dialogues): "the politics . . . is the complete sacrifice of morality and the inversion of an order of charity so that it becomes an order of flesh." The cumbersome and mechanical prose is symptomatic; an inept and pedantic labeling of the case, the

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sentence is ripe for a Scriblerian parody. Numerous examples of this kind could be cited from critical discussions that follow the course of particular works with flexibility and grace. One inevitable result of such categorical descriptions is that through frequent repetition terms like "order" and "charity" tend to become blurred and empty of meaning:

> *And write about it, Goddess, and about it . . .*
> *. . . Explain a thing till all men doubt it.*
> (Dunciad IV, 251-52)

(This is especially ironic, since Mr. Price writes extremely well about the Augustan concern with "the breakdown of language.") Pascal's mysterious but conceivable "feeling of true charity," which is "of an order infinitely more exalted" than "all bodies," "all minds," and "all their products," is stretched to cover so many kinds of selfless attitude—from Pope's "social love" to Clarissa's saintliness to Tom Jones's "good nature," that it blurs distinctions otherwise finely made.

The burden of criticism for the writer who relates ideas to literature in this fashion betrays itself most often through incongruity of

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tone. For example, Mr. Price says of a famous book that it "is a world to be studied as God's creation is studied in the *Essay on Man,* and his [the author's] diction throughout the book creates categories of discursive thought." This is an observation not on Butler's *Analogy,* but on *Tom Jones.* Or consider this comment apropos of "chastity" in Fielding:

> Joseph Andrews preserves his chastity, but with more difficulty in the case of Fanny than of Lady Booby. Tom Jones does not. Booth falls into adultery. But what is common to all these instances is the motif that is so clear in Dryden's heroic plays and *All for Love*: only the man of strong feeling can achieve the generosity of spirit that rejects the partial and restrictive views of more cautious or selfish men.

Parson Adams is appropriately mentioned in the next sentence.

It would be unfair to suggest that this kind of moralizing is necessarily characteristic of the approach to literary criticism through study of a relevant context of "ideas," though it may be partially responsible for treating Dryden's heroic plays, *All for Love,* and *Joseph Andrews* with the same unblinking seriousness. Finally, it is this lack of humor that we could wish away, the solemnity that we have come to associate with an ordinary evening in New Haven. Mr. Price, we need to remind ourselves, is writing much of the time about works that are richly and continuously amusing in a full Johnsonian sense. (For Johnson, "*Coriolanus* is one of the most amusing" of Shakespeare's performances.) Mr. Price is writing too about a body of literature that is in large part secular and humanist in its vision and values. The eighteenth century is not our most Christian century, and we should not, even by insinuations of tone, confuse it with the seventeenth. Would there be a place in *To the Palace of Wisdom* for Hume and for Gibbon, not to mention Tom Paine? Supposing the journey had ended, not in the *Marriage of Heaven and Hell,* but in *Pride and Prejudice,* what then? My quarrel with this impressive volume, which shows the author's easy familiarity with a large number of difficult and often baffling writers, and much resourcefulness in drawing parallels between works far apart in time and in genre, is "temperamental"—justifiable I trust, because to speak with uniform solemnity of writers so deviously witty and heartily comic is a kind of critical injustice. In this critical church there is scarcely a place for a smile, no room for cakes and ale, hardly a nook for Cowper's "cups that cheer but not inebriate."

Reuben A. Brower

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ENDGAME

WAITING FOR THE END. By Leslie A. Fiedler. Stein & Day. $5.95.

Leslie Fiedler's new work is ambitious and, as always, fitfully compelling. Fifteen essays are collected here; they range in subject from the twenties to the present, with occasional reflections on America's more distant past. The conversation-pieces are all present and accounted for: Jews, Negroes, Redskins, Huck and Jim. And although Mr. Fiedler's teeth, in the book jacket photograph, are noticeably bared, the blurb is reassuring: he, it says, "Professor of English at Montana State University for more than twenty years now, can no longer be called 'the wild man of American literary criticism.'" That is true enough. He has become, as both John Simon and *Time* have noted, just the man to liven up (or end) dull parties. In this book, his assertions are both admirably well-informed and comfortably irrelevant.

For the late-comers, Mr. Fiedler sets things straight, explaining, at some length, that in his last days Hemingway confused himself with Gary Cooper and became "the Bull," that, similarly, Frost came to regard himself as the inventor of New England, and that Steinbeck never should have won the Nobel Prize. One cannot disagree with these conclusions, but that the author should consider them *discoveries* is odd. He is, however, easily excitable: as when, celebrating what he has called, too modestly, his own "kind of madness and passion" (it is interesting to note that for the modernist the language of extremity becomes the rhetoric of praise) in an irate discussion of the movie *Moby Dick,* he concludes emphatically that Gregory Peck "would have been better cast as the whale." This may seem trivial, gratuitous, and indiscriminately patronizing; it is not, however, unexpected. Stylistically inclined toward the spectacular and facile, Mr. Fiedler has a singular ability to make even important truths sound very much like gossip. Hence, one waspish exposé included here (the title gives away the painfully apparent point) is called, characteristically, "The Jig Is Up!".

So long as he is trying to be funny he is only incidentally offensive; such lapses are excusable and may delight, if not instruct, some readers: in particular those who are "reasonably hip" enough to ask such pressing questions as "Do we have to become Gentile Jews before we can become White Negroes?". It is disheartening, however, to find that Mr. Fiedler is entirely serious when, talking about Hemingway, he says that "with a single shot he redeemed his best work from his

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worst, his art from himself, his vision of truth from the lies of his adulators." This is, at best, unnecessary; at worst, vulgar, sentimental, and obtuse. Whether or not they are intentional (and all the worse if they are not), the viciousness and smugness here bear witness to the author's gravest and most frequent weakness: a presumption which so far exceeds bad taste as to become, quite simply, inhumane.

Yet to be sure, and to be fair, he is perceptive. At his best he has an eye for correspondences which pass unnoticed by most critics. Examining a passage from Thoreau, for instance, he points out the duplicities and limitations of the White Man's "dream" of racial reconciliation. Similarly, dealing with the "diet-slim" poem now practiced notably, or at least fashionably, by Robert Creeley, he shows how the society's most banal aspirations may be operative, covertly, in its art. The hazards of this method are, however, obvious; if carried to extremes it leads to a form of analysis which is merely ingenious and which, more importantly, often confuses the esthetic with the real. Things tend to become easily symbolic: "That in our time the line of Emerson has been represented by a great poetic authority on snow and night actually called Robert *Frost* is one of those astonishingly

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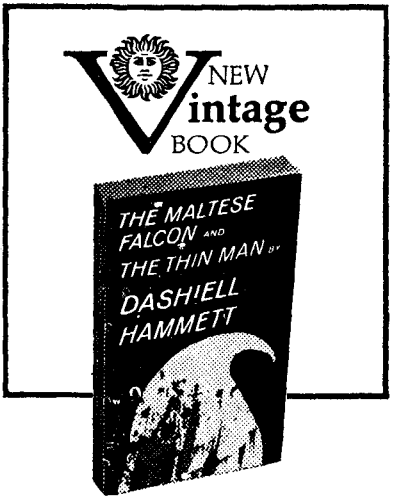

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happy accidents which almost persuade us that history is the subtlest allegorist of all." Reality is seen as literature, specifically as some kind of *roman à clef*: there is nothing at stake. The crucial gap between the seen and the envisioned, between facts and the imagination, disappears; and in the diagnosis of the ills of society its literature is appropriated to be used as *evidence*, not seen, in a more complicated and more useful way, as symptomatic.

In this connection Mr. Fiedler's false equation between Allen Ginsberg and the Ferdinand R. Tertan of Lionel Trilling's story "Of This Time, Of That Place," is significant. Briefly, Mr. Fiedler claims that Mr. Trilling not only "evoked" the student Ginsberg, but that "if Ginsberg invented Burroughs and Kerouac (in some sense, to some degree), Ginsberg himself (in a similar sense, in a similar degree) is the invention of the man who was his teacher, and who has become the dean of the generation of the Forties and Fifties, as well as the center of the new establishment," etc., etc. He maintains further that Ginsberg "appeared as a character before existing as an author in print. First portrayed as a mad student with whose madness his genteel but intellectually committed teacher learned finally to identify himself, Ginsberg sprang to a kind of mythic life." This is ambiguous, but certain implications are apparent, none of them to Mr. Fiedler's credit. As Mr. Trilling has already pointed out, the correspondence is impossible: not simply chronologically, however. For Mr. Fiedler's error is not merely factual: it is a fundamental error in interpretation and approach. This is a cartoon version of reality in which the poet Ginsberg, like KoKo the Clown, climbs out of Mr. Trilling's inkwell. To assume that Ginsberg is a wish-fulfillment, that he came to be by virtue of what Mr. Fiedler seems intent on seeing as Mr. Trilling's combination of genteel timidity and cultural frustration, is both naive and irresponsible, not to say terribly unfair to both these writers.

This tendency to mingle fact with fiction often lends an air of unreality to Mr. Fiedler's observations; his comments conjure up an amusement park America in which the literary world is a side-show. It is all part of the great extravaganza. Bit by bit the book becomes burlesque. Mr. Fiedler presides over his vaudeville America with an uncommon skill; it is, of course, no great surprise that William Burroughs, like a one-man band, becomes the star attraction. As though he were outside selling tickets, Mr. Fiedler calls him "the Black Saint of the American very young." This is inaccurate. With the exception of John Rechy, Mr. Burroughs' influence has been most visible in the work of certain writers, now approaching middle age, whom Mr.

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Fiedler calls the "youth impersonators"; they must do quite a good impersonation, since among the genuinely "very young" Burroughs is rarely read and when he is it is as a curiosity (all banned books are attractive), not as a "leader." Burroughs is too far away and too far gone to reach this generation where it counts; nor is this due, as Mr. Fiedler might further suppose, to what is in his narrow view its current "disaffected" and already doped-up state.

The author then reports that it was Allen Ginsberg who "gathered together the scraps of narrative, protest, and hallucination which make up . . . *The Naked Lunch*," who gave to them "what semblance of a shape—approximate only, even after Ginsberg's ministrations—the book has." It is a mystery how Mr. Fiedler can conclude from this that among the "various ways to declare the death of the novel" one way is "to *explode* it, like William Burroughs." If this is true, there must be hundreds of unseen, ungathered, and unpublished novels detonated every day, although judging from Mr. Burroughs' own method of composition it seems improbable that he, at any rate, could even find the fuse.

Reports of the novel's death have been greatly exaggerated, but to the howls of numerous symposiasts the author feels compelled to add his own. In his unwelcome "The End Of The Novel" essay, one proof offered for the genre's passing is a list of recent novelistic failures ("a cluster of egregious flops," as he puts it): this is a bit like saying that baseball is dead because the Yankees cannot win the pennant.

If one does not "explode" the novel, Mr. Fiedler argues, one can testify to its demise by mocking it from inside out, like Nabokov; but surely this is nothing new. From the beginning, novelists have parodied or played with the form's limitations and its possibilities: from Fielding to Sterne's *Tristram Shandy,* through *Zuleika Dobson* to Mann's *Buddenbrooks* and Gide's *The Counterfeiters.* And while it has always been possible to ape particular conventions (the epic) and subclasses (the gothic) of the novel, or to subvert them to one's own ends, the genre is so vast and flexible that to imagine something that would qualify as a parody of the form itself seems difficult, if not impossible: even an "anti-novel" is a novel. *Pale Fire* is not, as Mr. Fiedler states, an "anti-novel"; it is a new style novel in which the form is so ingeniously manipulated that one hardly feels it. The story could be told another way and more conventionally, but it is funnier this way. Mr. Burroughs, on the other hand, has been remarkably successful in not writing a novel (which is not quite the same as writing what is darkly and portentously referred to as an "anti-novel"); whatever weighty

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theoretical claims Mr. Fiedler may make for that, it hardly seems a memorable achievement.

One reason for the novel's death, according to the author, is that "the audience-need it was intended to satisfy is being better satisfied otherwise." The formulation is worth noting: it regards the novel as *commodity*. The only novel that will really "satisfy" an audience's "need" is one that is, perhaps unfortunately, suited to it. Our major writers (e.g. Melville, Faulkner) have not often sold well, especially when they were working at the height of their achievements. In any case, one thing is clear: since television, the mass audience has disappeared. For ten years Hollywood has faced this problem; yet it is rarely cited as a portent of disaster for the movies or as an explanation for bad movies. While the form may change, it need not die. A second reason Mr. Fiedler offers is the death of "the artistic faith that sustained" the writers of the novel. Perhaps no writer in America since World War I has been "sustained" by "faith" alone; yet novels, and good novels, have been written.

What is interesting is that in both of Mr. Fiedler's propositions the novelist takes his cues from his audience. But the problem is that in America the writer need no longer find an audience: it will find him. And when it does, his trouble may begin. Once he begins to suit himself (unconsciously at first but later wilfully, almost desperately, to stay in fashion) to the imaginative needs of that audience, the end begins. In the present situation, where the alternatives for survival seem to have become cult or commercial art, the only way is neither way. But in addition to the writers who drift toward the poles there are some, and Mr. Fiedler may, occasionally, be one of them, who, like Pop artists, want things both ways. Consequently, they have become self-consciously outrageous entertainers for a society demanding more and more extravagant and intricate forms of amusement.

The title of this book, extracted from a poem by William Empson, indicates the song that all America is singing and that Mr. Fiedler fiddles while the culture burns. But meanwhile some subversives, lashed to their own wills with their ears plugged, have refused to join in this unfortunate hootenanny. For them, at least, doom has not yet become a catchy tune.

Stephen Donadio

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NOTES

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